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The Early Pilgrims

ADELE MARIE SHAW
AND
ALBERT SHAW

# The Coast of Freedom

A ROMANCE OF THE ADVENTUROUS TIMES OF THE FIRST SELF-MADE AMERICAN

FRONTISPIECE FROM A PAINTING BY R. L. MASON

P. F. COLLIER & SON
NEW YORK

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TO ANNE DANA BARROWS SHAW AND JUDSON WADE SHAW TO WHOM ANYTHING GOOD IN THIS BOOK IS DUE

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# THE COAST OF FREEDOM

# THE COAST OF FREEDOM

## CHAPTER I

### IN THE DEAD HOURS

ROGER drew himself up from the water, climbed hardily through the darkness, and stepped out upon the uncertain footing above. The crazy ladder for which he had groped so long swayed backward from his lifted weight and the stealthy wash of ripples followed its motion. Through openings in the mouldered planking of the wharf crawling currents of air made their way to fasten clammily upon his drenched body. He shivered as he sheltered himself on the lee side of some loosely piled lumber that blocked his path.

The pyramid of logs and boults thrown out in all haste from the *Pelloquin's* hold told him where he stood. It was the very wharf whereon the cargo of his own ship had been unloaded. She lay now, the *Hopewell*, sister to the *Pelloquin*, far out beyond the docks waiting for the dawn that should give her leave to sail.

It seemed to Roger that since he had left her the darkness and chill of the night had grown darker and more chill. London slept; but uneasily, dismally, sounds of discordant life marring

its dull repose. Here by the water side the cold and damp, the blackness of the "dead hours," lay heaviest, the silence falling the more profound for the harshness of each intruding noise. Unspeakable odours rose from the river to mix with the nauseous exhalations of the land. Ships, discernible only as a blur of blacker spots upon the inkiness below, were huddled close along the indentations of the shore, the great crossed web of spars invisible. Here and there a lantern made a vague writing badly blotted upon the night. Nowhere an outline clear, a gleam of light distinct.

The lad leaned against a projecting beam, whose tapering end showed it to his touch already fashioned for a bowsprit. The distance from the *Hopewell's* side had been longer than he had thought; his breath came hard after his swim, and for a little he made no attempt to go farther. Now and again voices broke across the water loud in the fog, or the cries of late roisterers in the town dispersed themselves in goblin echoes among the clouds; once a boisterous group floundered past in the mud, oars dipped cautiously, oaths drove home orders to sleepy ears, tackle rattled as a boat was swung to place. Then the night was dumb again save where the plunge of a water rat set the sluggish waves awash against the slime-rotted props beneath the pier.

The smell of the pine was clean, and pleasant to his nostrils, sweetening the unsavoury dark; the jutting timbers shut him from the land, suggesting shelter. But the air was sharp. It took a freezing hold. He started, facing the shore;

and would have passed the obstructing lumber. At the same instant the rough way that ascended tunnel-wise between the houses resounded to other voices. Words exploded in riotous shouts. A very bedlam of echoes woke between the sodden earth and the low-hung sky. Over the stern bulwarks of the *Pelloquin* close at hand someone launched a volley of answering profanity and spat lustily upon the sullen flood beneath.

"Get ye to th' Dev'l, Greg'ry Bell'ngh'm!" came from the townward path.

" 'S not far for such as——"

Sharp remonstrance, commands, accompanied the roar, interposing between the listeners and the last word. Roger halted, having no mind to end his adventure at the wharf side.

" 'Ll not 'hush fool,' " the voice went on. " 'Hush fool!'—*hush dev'l*, say I! Art the very Dev'l himself, Bell'ng'm! Dost hear, Witherly? 'Tizh Old Nick employs thee. On thy kneezh—down rascal—on thy kneezh to Sathanas!"

Laughter full of drunken mockery, then a struggle with a roar less jovial, more enraged. The watch on the Puritan *Pelloquin* stirred again.

"Shut up, ye madmen," he shouted. "Hell take your blasphemies!"

The noisy one gave no heed to the exhortation. The clamour of his voice filled the air, without a break, save for the gaps of crapulous indistinctness.

"Easy task—th' Dev'l's job, Witherly! What's besh way—besh road to Heaven for a maid——" The word was cut short, but the shouting emerged

from the scuffle louder than before. "Drown her? —Too slow. Good Dev'l—Bell'ng'm—lend me a broomstick—carry her off——"

A fiercer protest, and a struggle more determined.

The party were opposite the lad, and two of them showed fleetingly in the wavering lantern gleam. The drunkard seemed the smallest of the three. In his dress was an attempt at foppishness that matched as ill as did his slender frame with the robust bellowings of his voice. The companion who supported his steps gave him the uncertain guidance of one whose own legs lurched under the effort. Roger could see the insensate frenzy, wild-eyed and quarrelsome, of the master; the wicked look, half maudlin, half cunning, of the man.

The third, who had been called Bellingham, was closely wrapped and stood so as to avoid the light, but in his attitude the lad could read savage contempt.

"Leave my name alone—— Get on—to your own wharf." He spoke low and furiously as they paused before the mass of lumber.

"'Tis but three beyond. Best not come further, sir." The sailor Witherly made a sly gesture of warning behind the drunkard's back.

"'Further'! I'll see this accurséd muddlehead upon his own vessel!" Not the words, nor the oaths before and after, but something in the voice came upon Roger with a violent repulsion—akin to nausea, wholly unrelated to fear. The tone was the lowest that could be uttered above a whisper

but it had a quality keen and poisonous as the night air. They were hardly an arm's length from where the lad waited; the same angle of the logs that sheltered him, between them and the *Pelloquin*.

The drunkard roared again, more softly, but with a more sinister mirth.

"Wilt do nothing, good Dev'l, 'gainst the will of th' *Seaflower's* master!" he hiccoughed. "Pretty thought, With'ly—gayes' gallant of the Court—in th' pocket of the *Seaflower's* m——"

The words were choked into infuriate spluttering. Curses such as the lad had never heard, even from the foul-mouthed skipper of the *Hopewell*, came raging forth, torrent-wise, from the drunkard's lips. His threats, mumbled and incoherent one minute, plain and articulate the next, evidently alarmed the others. They were without meaning to Roger save for the certainty of a villainy afloat, the intuitive horror of injustice in the face of it.

"Thou'rt mine—*Seaflower's* mine—an' thou'rt mine. One whisper—at th' Court—where'd be then th' King's good Bell'ng——!"

The sottish ravings had become all at once clear, rising to a threatening shriek. The sound of a blow and a fall—and a moment's silence. Roger did not hear the next words spoken. He was considering his own position should they move so that the lantern ray revealed him; more than all, he was tingling with an ever-growing longing to spring out upon them as they talked.

It was the sound of the voice he had so instantly

hated that brought him to new sense of their speech. The voice was still low, but more controlled, more menacing, and so the more repulsive.

"I shall know all—the witch will tell me. Ye're to make the death swift—and the proof sure for others. If ye fail—if ye bungle—if aught be traced to me—the reward is forfeit—and your heads will answer. If I get nothing—ye get no more. Let thy Captain remember that!"

"No fear, Sir. The Lady never fails."

"My men are on the hill," Bellingham went on, disregarding the interruption. "I've a mind to whistle them down—end ye both, and give the task to better——"

Again the sailor broke in protesting.

"There be no better. Who's better than the Lady, Sir! 'Tis but rare to see 'im in's cups. 'Tis for that he's the worse when 'tis upon 'im. He'll be straight as topsles, come the morning—close-mouthed as London Tower, Sir. The Lady's your man."

"Take him up—and hold thy peace. Be glad I hang not the two of ye." Bellingham kicked the prostrate form as Witherly bent to raise it. A groan followed the attempt. Roger could not see whether the Captain departed walking or carried, but mutterings of returning consciousness answered the other's threat.

"'Hang'!" The word was repeated in the thick chuckle of fuddled dreams. "'S not the master 'f—*Seaflower* 'll 'hang'. 'S Gregory Bell——" The syllables were gagged upon the mumbling

tongue. The three withdrew farther into the surrounding blackness.

Roger stepped cautiously forth into the muddy flat that lay between him and the city, seeking the narrow way whence the *Seaflower* party had descended.

He had reached its entrance, his foot fairly upon the broken flagging, when steps clattered again at the upper end. This time he kept sturdily on, boyishly unwilling to turn his back upon a probable foe.

"A plague on thee, Cousin!" Each syllable dropped to him distinct and clear. "There's not an if in the whole matter. Out on thy *ifs* and *buts!* We're rich already. The prize is there!"

"Hush, Ninny!" The interruption dammed the flow of jovial remonstrance as a sluice gate descends against a leaking flood. "Bellow not to wake the fleet! Thy voice carrieth like a trumpet!"

"And thine like a devil's fiddle. 'Tis less mellowed by our good William's feast," answered the other in an amiable shout.

"Thou'rt too cautious, Cousin—a very Roundhead for caution. 'Twas caution killed a cat. 'Caution'! 'Tis boldness he needeth most—— Boldness and speed, good Captain William, and listen not to his Grace's croaking. The prize is there—'tis there, I say, and the sooner it be in London——"

The good-humoured tones broke here under the impact of words quieter but more emphatic. Roger was keeping doggedly on, approaching constantly nearer to the spot where the yellow glow of torches advanced to meet his feet.

In this party as in the other, were three men, but the lad recognized with the earliest sound of their voices that here was no villainy hiding its face and barely picking its way by a shrivelled lantern glimmer. As he climbed toward them their words came to him ever more distinctly and his mind fastened with idle wonder upon the allusion to the "prize." What prize? And where were they to seek it? Would that he were bound on some gallant adventure, released forever from the hateful imprisonment of the *Hopewell!*

The party were now plainly visible. The two retainers that lighted them carried each a heavy stick in the right hand and peered into the lanes on either side, alert for danger. The lad saw that they wore a livery, but he was a provincial and did not know the colors of His Grace of Albemarle from the scarlet of the King's outriders.

The Duke alone was talking, his hand in a warning grip on the arm of his garrulous relative, his gaze alternately on the sloppy way and upon a silent figure whose cloak and hat gave to a remarkable stature the effect of the colossal.

It was this last member of the group that drew closest attention. His very manner of listening seemed to Roger more vital than the babble or the earnestness of his companions. Something in his appearance gave to the lad the thrill that pricks the young in the presence of power.

"Discretion were no cowardice," his Grace was saying. "Pirates and Spaniards may wait on a more favorable——"

The foremost torch bearer came suddenly in

Roger's path and leaped at him, striking with the viciousness of sudden fright. The glare in their eyes had helped to conceal one approaching from the direction of the shore, and the echoes multiplying their own footsteps had covered those of another. Roger was unaware how wholly he had been hidden. The assault took him smartly by surprise. His left arm warded the blow but it came shrewdly upon the flesh of his shoulder. On the instant the sting of it shot home the boy's response. The retainer dropped limply upon the stones, his torch plunged extinguished in a miry pool.

The party closed upon the lad angrily.

" 'Tis a spy! A vile rogue set on to spy about the town," announced blackly the prater so lately silenced. "A dozen may be hid within his call. Have a caution, your Grace! Be not rash, Captain——"

"'Rash' indeed, Sir 'Ninny'! Five to one is brave odds!" Roger had wheeled at the warning. The flare showed him well grown, well built, and of a carriage fearless and pleasing.

Rage dimmed the eyes of his accuser.

"Hold thy tongue, thou river-spawn! What dost thou here?"

"What thou dost not—mind my own affairs!" the lad retorted.

The loud voice drew nearer, sneering.

" 'Tis only mermen and wharf rats have affairs in the water!"

"And 'tis more the part of spies and wharf rats to set upon one unarmed, with cudgels!" Roger

finished hotly. His anger, less boisterous than the suspicions it flung off, was none the less vivid. Something in the challenge of his bearing struck pleasingly upon the other's humour.

"Lord love us!" he interjected delightedly. "'Tis a fine fellow. Well met! Up Cadgson—more light——"

The man of the imposing figure had stood so as to cut off retreat by a shoreward plunging alley.

"More light, but not for sport, Sir John," he interposed. "'Tis time I were away—and his Grace and I lend not our weapons for thy nonsense." He moved briskly forward and the glare of the remaining torch struck squarely into the face beneath the wide hat.

"Captain Phips!" Roger turned unguarded, with a quick gesture as if he would have uncovered, gladness and confidence in the motion, hardly tinged by the remembrance of his wet and hatless plight.

The other torch-bearer had crept up from behind, a vengeful glitter in his half-closed eyes. He had somewhat precipitately moved backward in the earliest stage of the discussion and was bent upon re-establishing his credit. In the moment of his triumph the stick was wrenched from his hands and flung violently over his head, his upraised arm seized, and his thick bulk drawn swiftly forward.

The Captain searched Roger's face in the clearer light.

"Young Verring!" he exclaimed, astonishment in the recognition. Without another word he

set his face toward the river and whistled, a long, straight signal, individual and peremptory. Somewhere beyond the closest tangle of ships a light lifted and dropped in answer, moving apparently like a will-o'-the-wisp, without guidance save for its own fantastic whim.

"I know the lad; he will go with me. We need wait no longer." Captain Phips looked at the graver of his two companions.

The Duke of Albemarle nodded. He had watched the boy with suspicion no less ready than his cousin's. Now he turned away and joined himself to the Captain for a final colloquy as they descended to the wharf. The valiant aggressor in the brief battle had been set upright upon his feet and held his relighted torch but drunkenly as he essayed to follow.

Sir John had melted again to his jovial mood, and balanced judiciously upon the slippery path as he and Roger fell in before the subdued Cadgson.

"Not even a wig to keep the night air from thy hot head?" he remonstrated cheerfully. "Art over young to wander at this hour with no better weapon than a saucy tongue! 'Spy' and 'wharf-rat'!" He laughed. "'Twas fair exchange! But 'Sir Ninny'—I like not 'Sir Ninny'. Were't not for our good William who meaneth to carry thee hence——"

"Nay, Sir John," the lad put in frankly, "I withdraw the word." His mind came back suddenly under the sway of that law whose observance had been to him all his life both good-breeding and religion—reverence for those of

greater age. "I pray you pardon it," he said, and though answering laughter was in his eyes, his voice rang with a deprecation honest as his wrath.

Sir John clapped a gloved hand powerfully upon the boy's arm and let it rest there, both for friendliness and the support thus secured, until the farewells were said.

"We shall meet again, lad." They had passed the lumber pile and could see the Captain's boat waiting below the stairs. "An' ever thou wouldst find a friend in London, remember Sir John Winchcombe."

"In with you, Roger."

The command of Captain Phips gave no opportunity for reluctance had any existed in the lad's mind.

"Good luck! Good fishing!" called back the voluble cousin of his Grace, as the four landsmen moved off, the resuscitated torch-bearer wading dizzily after his comrade. "Remember 'hope deferred'—how goeth the rhyme? 'Tis very deadly, Captain—hope—grown—stale!" So plain was every sound in the murk, Roger could hear the plash and sucking of the mud beneath the departing tread, and the wide boot tops flapping one upon another. The voice of Sir John grew louder as the distance increased.

"Come quickly home, good William!

> 'Stay not to woo the sirens of the isles,
> Stay not——'"

But the melody was quenched in its first outpouring, and the jerked snatches that came river-

ward as the boat made its way past the beetling hull of the *Pelloquin* seemed more like growls than song.

## CHAPTER II

### BOUND FOR STRANGE SEAS

THE cabin of the *Araby Rose* showed an extravagant illumination. Roger had looked up wondering as he crossed the threshold. On each of the four walls hung a lantern, the one above the door disclosing its light not through horn but from a diamond-shaped window of glass.

The shine of it revealed the polished wood of the fittings and the brass knobs upon locker and cupboard. More than all, it revealed the face of Captain Phips.

Roger's gaze had dwelt but swiftly on the place; it had stayed itself upon the Captain, a happy enthusiasm in its clear regard.

"So 'twas to have your foot on English soil! Was't worth the wetting?" The shrewd eyes of which the lad had been plainly conscious throughout the seeming indirection of their discourse were fixed suddenly upon his face. "When sails the *Hopewell?*"

"To-morrow." Roger fell silent. The Captain drew upon his long pipe, apparently absorbed in the gentle bubbling within its bowl.

"I could not go back to Boston—and never once ashore in England!" The lad's utterance lost for a moment the respectful restraint of his earlier words.

"And why not?" Captain Phips settled him-

self more comfortably in his great chair, the only chair on the *Araby Rose*, and blew into the air a monstrous cloud. The look with which he had begun the conference, a look that corresponded with a certain keenness of thrust in his questions, had gone, dissolved in attention less distrustful, equally discerning.

"'Tis the land of my ancestors—my grandfather's home." The lad spoke with a warmth, a sentiment, almost passionate. A flush followed the outburst, and he made swift retreat into the habit of reserve that was his Puritan heritage. "None but a slave would submit so far," he went on resolutely. "I was the only one forbid the shore."

"'Tis your father's own ship, the *Hopewell?*" The Captain pushed his tankard across the table. "Drink, lad. It were worse folly to add an ague to your disobedience. Drink. I should have thought your captain like to favour his owner's son."

"I asked no favour."

The glow that had warmed Roger's eyes and lighted his face vanished suddenly like the electric play upon a summer sky. He drank as he was bidden, suppressing a shiver as the heat of the spirit grappled with the chill of his body.

"Was it your father's will you be set to the common tasks?" Captain Phips leaned forward, his pipe suspended in his hand.

"Not all, not save as the training seemed needful for the better understanding of a ship. But I am a man. I can do a man's work." There was

a moment's pause. "'Twas a punishment, my voyage," he went on hurriedly.

"Punishment for what?" The Captain knocked his pipe upon the table's edge and refilled it carefully, but Roger knew the shrewd eyes still studied him. A half-defiant hardness in his tone disappeared as he continued, and he spoke with neither bravado nor weak shame.

"It was a brawl. I angered a sailor at the dock. When he would have kicked me I knocked him down. His fellows set upon me. My father had trouble to keep me from the stocks."

The Captain pursed his lips softly. It would have been hard to say whether there was reprobation or sympathy in the gesture.

"Brawls are bad things," he commented gravely. "What was the man's offence?" He looked up, drumming with one strong finger on the resonant wood.

The loutish youth who had earlier carried off the heavy cloak shuffled sleepily in view.

"Did you call, Sir?" he asked sullenly.

"No. Call? No," answered the Captain shortly. "An' thou come with as good will, Jacob Munch, when I do call as when I don't, thou'lt make vast improvement."

Behind his back the youth scowled again and slunk a little forth. Roger was conscious that the shuffling footsteps halted before they were withdrawn out of earshot of the cabin.

The Captain's voice had sharpened at the sight of the sullen apparition and he spoke almost harshly.

"Wast rash and ungentle, boy. What had the man done?"

"Kicked a lamb but newly born. It staggered on the plank, ('twas on a Hingham pinnace) and when it cried—crushed in its ribs—and mimicked the cry.——I could not bear it." The lad's eyes were fiercely alight, contradicting the respectful modulation of his speech. He drew himself more erect as he finished.

" 'Twas a right blow—a brute he is would harm a lamb. Many's the one I've carried through Pemaquid storms." The Captain pulled reminiscently at his pipe, his look searching the lad's face. But there be good people," he went on, smiling with tightened lips, "who hold it an impiety to waste pity on the beasts that perish. Is't thy father's belief?"

Roger hesitated.

"My father would not be cruel," he replied evasively.

"And 'twas by his commands thou wast forbid the shore?"

"Nay—'twas not so," The lad answered with a mounting anger. "I myself heard him desire of Captain Gillam that he show me somewhat of London."

"Gillam!" A curious gleam crossed the Captain's expression. Amazement showed in his exclamation. "Thou wert to see the sights of the town with Raving Rufus!"

"He beareth himself discreetly in Boston. None would so abhor the man as my father if——"

"'If'! If Nicolas Verring knew his man he'd

sooner have sent thee with the Devil alone!——I'll warrant the rascal took not kindly to thy company on his ship!" The pipe had been pushed upon one side, the tankard rested unfilled. There was a tenseness about the Captain's mouth, a new concentration in his regard.

"He hated me," the lad answered simply.

" 'Twas a harsh discipline, the *Hopewell's?*"

Roger gave back the penetrating gaze with a sudden confidence.

" 'Twas worse than that," he broke forth, then fell sharply silent as though he had spoken unwarily.

"How many souls had she aboard?"

"Fifty-three—when we sailed."

"And how many lost you on the voyage?"

"Eleven."

"Some of these died in the hold?"

"Aye, sir." The lad shuddered.

Over their heads the steps of the watch went to and fro. Within, silence fell upon both. Roger's gaze still held to the imposing figure before him, and his lips essayed to speak, but found the beginning difficult. To him, as to all the youth of Boston, Captain Phips was a hero. To stand well in the eyes of one's hero is a hard thing to forego. But his waiting lasted no more than a full breath.

"That was not my sole offence," he said abruptly. "I had been often troublesome. My tongue——"

"Is too quick—and thy hand not over slow to follow?" The Captain's face broadened with

sudden laughter that overran it. "Art not the only one, my boy! And art young yet. How old may'st thou be?"

"Sixteen—within the month."

"So old!" The Captain smiled still, with genial irony.

" 'Tis a man's age, Captain Phips," the lad protested. "Mr. Mather had his degree from the college and was preaching at seventeen."

"And what would a runaway in London—even though a man grown——" The pause was filled with the smile, quizzical and friendly.

"Not a runaway. I am going back." Roger had risen.

"Thou art!" There was loud incredulity in the repetition. The steps of the watch came to a halt, then resumed their march. "Going back to Raving Rufus! Why, lad, he'll kill thee; kill and quarter thee."

"He may not discover my absence. If I desert—There's no other way, Sir. I must tell my own story in Boston."

"Art not afraid for thy life?"

" 'Tis not fear, I think—but I have taken 'count of the danger. There'd be none to hinder were it smallpox—or something quicker. If it happen I do not reach home——" He looked up impetuously—"when you come again to New England would you—if you could give some assurance to my mother—and my father as well—that I had not disgraced them—that is—if you believe me?"

There was no bathos in the appeal. He spoke

soberly and with a composure too earnest to admit a doubt of its reality.

Captain Phips rose suddenly from his chair, barring the way.

"Damn thee, lad," he said furiously. "Thou shalt tell thy own tale and I'll better it. Nay—no protest—no words, boy. Thou'rt on the *Araby Rose* and on the *Araby Rose* thou'lt stay!"

The night was already far spent. As the web of masts and spars grew clear against the first redness of the dawn, three ships floated from their moorings and entered the current of the Thames. The *Pelloquin* led. In a locker of her master's cabin reposed a sealed packet addressed in the plain unflourished script of Captain Phips:

NICOLAS VERRING, ESQ.,
Boston in
New England.
To be delivered unto his own person by
the hand of Captain Stukely.

Before they reached the mouth of the river the *Araby Rose* had passed the merchant vessel, the trumpets hailing joyously across the tide at flood.

Roger, newly arrayed in the clothing of the loutish Jacob, stood just forward of the upreared poop and waited upon the Captain's word. His mind had dwelt in momentary amaze upon the unfriendliness of his old schoolfellow and he would have refused the forced loan had his captor been less peremptory.

"Art a prisoner, lad, and fairly taken!" the

Captain had laughed in the confidence of their final converse. It was then that Roger had questioned him abruptly, spurred by a quick recollection.

"Know you, Sir, one Gregory Bellingham?"

The Captain had frowned.

"Where hast thou met with Gregory Bellingham?" he had asked sharply.

Roger had recounted quickly what he had overheard, omitting nothing that gave light upon the mission of the *Seaflower*, but adding no interpretation of his own.

"Rascals all!" the Captain had commented. " 'Tis a name oft spoken in the Court of James—Gregory Bellingham. A dissolute set—his fellows, but gentlemen and with long purses. The man is said to be well favoured. Didst see him?"

" 'Twas dark; he kept well in the shadow," Roger had replied.

"A subtle knave! Am told 'tis matter of conjecture whence come his revenues. There was much gossip of sudden deaths that cut off his supplies and brought no legacies. 'Twas looked for he should be bankrupt long ere this. Smallpox and scurvy, lad, there's money behind this coward's plotting, be sure of that!" Captain Phips had fallen to musing, finishing more to himself than to Roger: "Would I could overhaul the *Seaflower*." The wish remained suspended, incomplete.

"And could we not?" The lad had drawn nearer eagerly.

"Nay, Roger, 'tis an English ship—and were we to end the scum, 'tis not like their master would

give over his attempt, and him no man can touch—he hath the King's ear. Hearken and keep thy counsel, lad—we go upon errands not our own. But let none be wiser for aught thou'st overheard or what I tell thee now."

Roger had waited with arrested breath in the pause that had followed.

"We seek a Spanish treasure sunken these fifty years." The Captain's voice had dropped to the level baffling to an eavesdropper. "She lieth somewhere among the reefs of the West Indies. 'Tis the same treasure I sought in the King's ship late returned. Now I go for the Duke—whom you saw—and his friends, on information gained too late for that voyage, of an old man at Port de la Plata."

The lad's heart bounded beneath the homespun of Jacob Munch, recalling the words.

Others let drop by the incautious Sir John came luminously back.

"Good luck to your fishing!" "The prize is there——" "We're rich already!"

The very wind in the cordage sang of it. A glorious venture! And Captain Phips!

The Captain had appeared and the redness had grown yellow save for a crimson streak before the prow. The commander of the *Rose* was as fresh, as ruddy of face and vigorous, as one new-risen from slumber. To the familiarity of the night just past Roger could not expect to return, but his eyes clung to the splendid figure with the loyal satisfaction of homage.

The mate saw the warmth in the lad's look, and

cast a contemplative eye upon the goodly limbs within the borrowed raiment.

"Sure the clothes of Jacob Munch will be refusin' to return to their owner! 'Tis the handsome face and figger of yon lad sets 'em off!" he remarked blithely in the Captain's ear.

Jacob Munch heard. His furtive gaze narrowed as he slouched aft to the Captain's cabin.

Upon the vague horizon line the glass showed a lurking speck upon whose track they seemed to follow—the *Seaflower*, set already far upon her way.

Roger had no glass, and he had not marked the glance of Jacob Munch. The glamour of the morning was upon his sight.

Here was his wish fulfilled—unless the whole were dreaming! The *Hopewell* dwindling behind them was well-nigh forgotten, its horrors already old; the sails of the *Pelloquin* shone wondrously in the early light, and the *Araby Rose*, mounting upon the swell, outsped them both, bound joyfully for strange seas and the sunken galleon of Spain.

## CHAPTER III

"Where below another sky
Parrot islands anchored lie."

IN the still dawn of tropical waters the *Araby Rose* floated black against the softly unfolding light. Black, too, against the east, an island on either hand lifted its tuft of plumy vegetation and framed the waste. Between the ship and that infinitely far horizon whence she had come stretched a limitless ocean.

While the forecastle still slept Roger had come forth under the stars and mounted into the rigging, where the motion was no more than the swaying of a cradle, so gently the *Rose* slipped through the scarce-stirred surface of the sea.

A quiet full of lonely danger brooded upon the place. Not the nightmare that had threatened the men of Columbus, not the fear lest their bark come suddenly to the edge of the world and so plunge off into night and space, but the danger of robbery and murder, of ghastly deaths here in this delusive peace so often made a desolation of slaughter and rapine.

On what island might not be hid the fastness of a buccaneer; from behind what rich foliage of palm and vine might not dart the hawk-like prow of a L'Ollonois or a Morgan? These were the rendezvous of the pirate kings, the seas of the West Indies. Here they came to count their gains, recruit their ranks, and find the consorts of

their hellish deeds. The Pacific had drawn off vast numbers, wild with the greed of savage conquest, but yet the breed multiplied in the old hunting ground, though merchants had grown wary and travellers that cared little for adventure and set high value on their lives preferred the hardships of the longer passage to the perils of the Isles.

In the sky the faint blue deepened and brightened, revealing distance beyond distance, alluring the eye to ever loftier exploration. Roger's gaze lost itself in the ether, came back to rest in the clear waters below, and once more searched the horizon, disappointed when the ocean showed still empty save for a shadow lying low to the southwest.

Then the rising sun blazed in his face, sending across the dim expanse a blinding good-morrow. As it moved upward from the water's rim leaving its ensanguined trail upon the sea, it appeared not so much the sun known and welcomed in other days as a strange luminary bursting upon a universe new found.

Upon the *Rose* the business of the day was rapidly begun, the noisy activity on her decks opposing itself sharply to the silent monotony on every side. The shadow to the southward darkened as they approached; a strong irregular line grew plain against the light. Toward it the ship's company strained an eager watch.

From the feebly distended sails and the warping deck there glowed upon them a remorseless heat. The skin baked upon their parching bodies, and the salt of perspiration was streaked dry and white

upon bare backs. But the ship fared steadily forward through the moveless sea, and, at last, between the shimmer above and the dazzle below, appeared the solid green of mountains.

As they drew near, the *Araby Rose* wore round and tacked lazily westward along the uneven shore. Far inland a lofty range stretched parallel with their going, uplifting itself, a marvel of blue changes, to the blue-tinged sky—indigo on the lower slopes; purple, violet, azure, on the peaks above. And from this distant range long ridges reached out toward the sea, spread like the legs of some vast centipede crawling heavily across the world.

From the soft blur of the far heights and pale blue sky to the near green of slopes that rounded to the sea, solitude and mystery possessed the land. Upon the hills, a wonderful, thick growth of trees hid shore and rocks even to the ripples of the tide. One after another appeared deserted valleys, now narrow, deep cleft between the mighty spurs; now broad, widened into savannas, where the dense foliage of the heights gave way to ranks of cocoa palms, standing separate and stork-like, their plumage ruffling in airs unfelt below.

Birds flashed from the green gloom of the forest and wavered above the *Rose*. Their calls, quaint and unfamiliar, broke gratefully on the silence. Their numbers increased as the ship ran in closer to a tree-screened bay, their shadows circling upon the deck, while the Captain studied with keen eyes the wild succession of mountain top and glade. The roar of tumbling water came cool upon the beating air, and died, a lost mirage of sound, as

the *Araby Rose* sheered off and set her sails once more to catch the elusive breeze.

Still they moved idly westward upon the placid sea, the airs that were abroad coming in soft and vanishing puffs. Nor did the wind rise as the rain descended, a straight and furious shower upon the streaming planks. When the flood ceased, without warning of slackening drops, they were abreast a wooded height. At the water's edge gleamed a narrow line that might be sand; from it the cliff rose, abrupt and fortress-like, an isolated headland in the undulating coast. Looking up to find the battlements, the lad wondered how the mantle of heavy trees could cling upon the steep escarpment. A scarlet-coated guard of sentinel flamingoes at its foot gave loud-voiced warning of the approach. A laughing gull answered with a derisive scream, dipping to rest his wings upon the emerald sea.

The *Rose* had veered to the left, following the outline of the promontory; the green crag ended suddenly and the ship came, all in an instant's gliding advance, upon a glimpse of land-locked water. The sails moved upon her spars, and her bow, turning slowly about, pointed toward the dark, contracted channel into which the tide rippled softly. Puzzled looks went from the narrow opening to the Captain's face. Heads wagged in unspoken comment. But between the walls of green towering on either side, the *Rose* took her course with stately ease, clearing the gateway of an unsuspected bay, and swerving without haste or jar to safe mooring under the beetling cliff.

The pool where she floated was basined like a

mountain lake; beyond, the waters shallowed to a wide lagoon. Rough rejoicing woke upon her decks; surprise subdued it to a busy alertness of the sense.

As the anchor dropped, great crabs scuttled, with a noise like the clatter of hoofs, across the shaly beach, rustling out of sight with startled speed. High above, in the dusk of the leaves, a gaudy parrot swung dizzily. His shrill greeting gave to the silent harbour a stronger spell of calm, his excitement, resentful and amazed, making the more profound its deep security.

Here a ship might lie hid from without until the trees, grown old and rotted under their firm, enfolding bark, crashed from their citadel into the depths below. For the imposing headland overtopped the tapered height of masts, and from its inner side was scooped a great recess, so cleanly curved it bent like a protecting arm behind its deceptive front of mountainous bulwark impinging on the sea.

The water was all a-glitter with the sun that glinted gaily to the very entrance of caverns under the impending rocks, caverns from whose darkness a cold breath came like cellar damps upon the quivering heat. Great roots sprawled from the ledges above and twisted across the faces of the caves a latticed screen. Tall shrubs leaned out upon the rugged arches, clinging with ropy and tenacious hold to unseen crevices.

As the hours grew late, clouds closed in again across the blue. The tops of the distant mountains, barely visible from the hidden *Rose*, disap-

peared in the watery mist. A chill came out of the forest, pleasant at first after the day's heat, but growing damp and clammy with coming night. Roger, lingering upon the poop, saw the world extinguished suddenly, and put out his hand as if the blackness might be tangible.

In the forecastle the crew sang uproariously. They were a crew of many nations but of a single expression, savage and credulous.

Fangs, called also the Tusker and the Mole, harangued them in the intervals of song. The voyage had been long enough to fill the ears of all, not only with what the wise Fangs knew but with more that he imagined, long enough to weary the men and whet their appetites for tales of mad adventure. The land was welcome. Its shade called to them after the burning days; its wildness stirred the ferocity of their blood with vague hope of change. Ignorant and dull of fancy, they had had but blind scent of their quarry till Fangs had shown the way.

" 'Twas 'ereabouts 'e came when King James fitted 'im out," he vouchsafed arrogantly. " 'Twas treasure 'e was after then, and 'tis treasure 'e's after now." He swore unctuously and communed with himself in contemptuous words. "Eighteen guns 'e had an' ninety-five men—*and e' went back!*" The oracle paused, drawing his lips away from two protruding teeth in a sneer not without malice.

"He had to go back," answered Gedge, who shared with Fangs a half-emptied flagon. He, too, garnished his speech with oaths but its flavor lacked a virulence of blasphemy wherein his mate's

excelled. "The King ain't sendin' ships to rot in these here bays. He couldn't stay away cruisin' forever, could he?"

"W'y not?" demanded the other, his little eyes cunningly awatch.

"'Cause he ain't no sech pillgarlic," answered the Massachusetts man; but he drank sociably and waited. Fangs was entertaining.

" 'E's simple, Gedge, that's w'at 'e is. There's more treasure on the sea than in it!" Fangs had sunk his voice sibilantly. "Gold in plenty and who was to know—with the Spaniards a lawful prize—but a man might wait till Day o' Doom to get rich under Captain Phips. 'E's simple, I tell ye."

The yellow glim of forecastle lanterns made a bright space on the forward deck. A warmer glow struck upward through the skylight of the Captain's cabin. Roger looked away from the familiar shadows of the *Rose* into the velvet dark that pressed upon him with strange hypnotic touch. The ballad of Skipper Joe rolled sleepily from the bows. Had any of the crew once sailed these seas in lawless freedom? The lad remembered the light of recognition that had shown in the eyes not of Fangs alone during these last days of cautious threading of the island straits. Did the sight of this sheltered bay, the caves, the uninhabited jungle, bring back to them fierce longings and brutal recollections? Was it for that Captain Phips had set the men to harder toil, exacting a busy service which made sleep more welcome than much idle talk?

While he wondered, his face set toward the invisible waters and the vanished shore, a breath stirred upon the wide lagoon. Above the silent thrilling of the waves a luminous whiteness broke in shifting gleams. From the bank an answering whiteness, of opening blossoms, shone in a dim splendour against the blackness of the slope. Their fragrance, half guessed within the thousand perfumes of the night, ambrosial, aromatic, pierced beyond the senses and woke the soul to dreams of mystery and conquest wide and resistless as the inflowing sea.

A forest wind, damp with unwholesome dews, cold with the chill of caverns, blew upon them as they slept. Before its influence was spent and the morning laid hot hands on bodies sunk in its cool relief, the tender was lowered from the side of the *Araby Rose* and loaded carefully. Roger's heart, that had been weighted with apprehension lest he be left behind, beat with a cheerful zeal as they shoved off from the ship's side, a ghostly company in the uncertain dusk.

The sailors swayed dully with the swinging blades, as if sleep held them yet. In the stern the Captain steered in silence. Midway of the lagoon a force invisible balked their listless oars. Straining harder against an unseen enemy, they crept, scarce sure of motion, on the flood. The thwarting force increased; but the small craft jerked and heaved unsteadily forward, responding to a stouter stroke.

As they drew out from the heavy shadow of the precipice the dim wall of trees upon the farther

shore grew clear. The stars, plain but an instant gone, were lost in day. Orange and crimson light shone upon the sky, a green streak banded across the red and reflected in the dark waters brighter than the inverted image of the wood.

The colours paled swiftly through hints of rose and amethyst, blending all at once into a white and indistinguishable glow. Near the anchorage of the *Rose* a tide-washed rim of whitened rock divided the agate waters from the land, but on the side which they approached no land was visible. Rank growths crowded into the waves; great trunks, decayed and broken, leaned from the tangle, slipping to their fall. Dead leaves, and blossoms matted in the slime, sent up a visible reek from caves and weltering pools. Insects glinting with gold and silver swam where the black flood was blackest. Here and there the earth had sunk away from the roots of some high-towering palm and left it solitary, the eddies swirling between it and the forsaken bank.

Rowing became easier, but the force that bore them back dragged still upon their progress and the sailors peered with suspicious eyes into the changing colors beneath the boat. Suddenly the shore was gone. They had passed the point of land that concealed the opening, and, where all had been a thick and hopeless jungle, an inlet showed. Into it they swung, pulling between tall, pillared groves till as they went it was clear the inlet was a river. The dragging mystery was explained. They had crossed a battleground where the stream contended with the flooding tide.

The point of land was but a river bar, a natural breakwater reared against the determined sea. Beyond it the waters broadened. Along the margin mammoth fern fronds waved above lush weeds and reedy grasses, some erect and shaken lightly as the salty waves moved shoreward among the thick grown stalks, some flat where the tide's turn had set the current racing for the bay.

Mighty lianas clambering upward mounted in loose-twisted coils, hiding smooth-columned trunks and drooping in huge festoons wherever their swinging wreaths found room. High above a labyrinth of vine-fettered stems and strange-leaved branches tipped with yellow flame of flower sprays, the New England lad could see the brave mahogany and the monstrous satinwoods that lifted their heads into the very sheen and dazzle of the sky.

At the edge of the marsh a solemn bird stood motionless. A young pelican, dull-brown and sombre in the glitter of the day, swooped suddenly to dart its bill beneath the flood, taking swift tribute of a life as strange and various as the flowers upon the banks. Roger looked down among the darting shoals and watched the changes, gay-hued and multiform, beneath the oars.

The atmosphere was full of heated moisture, a suffocating blanket through which to draw the breath. Horny backs blistered in the increasing glow. Once a sun-dried island blocked their path, a mound of cracking mud raised in mid-stream and held by crawling mangroves that dropped long tentacles to find a wider grasp upon the sediment

and reached tarantula claws on every side to clamp and keep what was already gained.

As the flow of the stream overcame the tide's advance the river narrowed and deepened. Strange blossoms and fruits of poisonous lustre spilled everywhere a powerful perfume. Butterflies, scarlet and green and glossy black, spotted with tawny and gold, came into the open space where the sunlight invited, and fluttered their great soft wings, undulating in a dreamy trance beneath the intoxicating shine.

Then the straight-shafted trees spread the lofty shelter of their tops, a high arcade, across a dusky waterway. The shower of vines dripping from the arch softened the blaze beyond, and from the dappled shade that marked the tunnel's mouth even to the farthest palm that brushed the unshadowed heavens a tender distance gave an unreal glamour to the scene.

The birds that piped and called in the impassable thicket seemed far away. The parrokeets that flew high overhead, the monkeys that splashed the water with hard green balls and fled with gay and chatterlng laughter out of sight, the stillness that brooded where the place grew darkest, were a phantasy of sound and silence. And when they floated forth into the garish light, their eyes were dazed and smarting, and a million imps bestrode the dancing atoms of the heat.

The signs of swampiness were gone. The confining outline of the stream grew more irregular, jutting here and there in hilly capes and odd peninsulas, where the earth, crumbling about the

edge, showed red and brown, a cleaner mould than the black soil of the coast. Wild orange trees caught the shine on glossy boughs thrust outward to the light; long, sparkling leaves of ginger root pushed like bent swords through netted shrub and bush. Star-apple and magnolia, wild plum and pepper plant, strove with a myriad growths unnamed for air and light, demanding space to live.

Roger kept the measure of the dipping oars unheeding what he did. The shore drew him with the power of the unknown. The odour of the forest, full-breathed and lusty fragrance of an ever-blooming land, was filled with untried potencies. Every leaf, spread like a giant fan, thrilled him with extravagant content.

Vague, premonitory whiffs of the ocean breeze had overtaken the plodding tender. As they turned a bend that sent them toward the mountain, a cool shower of air passed over them, and the feathery bamboos laid spray to spray bowing inland before the wind.

Beyond a shaded cove made by its own encroaching on the stream, a hillock pushed its way into the current. Behind it the bank sloped upward, an abrupt ascent. Here Captain Phips steered the boat to land, brushing great lily pads that pressed him back from shore.

The shade was grateful, but it held a swarm of tiny flies that settled greedily on steaming bodies. The breeze had died again, and a basking crocodile, wriggling with a lumpish splash into the water, drifted leisurely down stream and out of sight.

Roger watched the vigorous figure of the Captain

as it hacked a passage through the living barrier and disappeared behind the matted hedge of brake and prickly shrub; then he looked upward, gazing into impending boughs so interlaced they seemed to bear red bloom and lilac, wide cups of dim vermilion and purple corymbs, on the self-same stem.

"Ashore with ye! Quick there—and bring the tools."

It was the Captain's shout. The men answered with a joyous yell, tumbling into the breach in the thorny wall with scrambling haste. The deserted boat tugged at a leaning tree, turning slowly from side to side among the lily pads.

Roger, swifter than the rest, came first upon their leader, mounted to the highest point of the mound and cutting relentlessly at the side of his green cave, where half the breadth of a mammoth trunk was already exposed.

" 'Tis this fellow we want. To work, lads! Clear the place!" The command came with a resonant cadence; satisfaction sounded in the voice.

Disappointment, an angry chagrin, showed in the scowling faces of the men. Roger glanced from one to another and set himself briskly at the destruction of the tangle. How much did they guess? Had they expected to be led to a pirate hoard here in the woods? The grumbling was not loud; the Captain's ears were keen. With the word the jungle was falling under a sharp assault. Knives and axes struck ravenously, and opening after opening appeared where the solid barricade was hewn away.

Tom the carpenter, whose face alone looked cheerful, was set with Gedge to enlarge the space about the Captain's prize.

Vine strands, fine and tenacious as spun wire, dulled their steel; a milky weed left white and swollen blotches on hands and arms; now and then resounded within the wood a noise like pistol shots, the bursting of the sandbox pods loosed by the vibration of the onslaught.

Tom the carpenter and the garrulous Gedge had made themselves a chamber wherein an axe could swing in full curve to the stroke. Now their blows echoed in alternate rhythm upon the solid girth whose leafy top was hid above the spread of foliage nearer to the ground.

"Yellow saunder, eh? Then 'tis a dugout he'll be making." Bill Sparhawk chuckled, cleaving the jointed bamboo stalks, large as a man's arm, that everywhere pierced their soft insistent way.

"Saunder!" The boatswain slashed scornfully at the thorn bush. " 'Tis a cottonwood. Hear that? 'Tis the cotton-tree plover."

Roger lifted his gaze to the wattled roof over their heads, but the bird's protesting notes were lost in invisible heights above. A soft steam rose around them, water ran upon their bodies, dripped into their eyes, trickled in tickling drops about their ears. To the lad, strong in the vigour of delighted youth, the exhaustion of the others appeared a lazy affectation.

" 'Tis small matter if you call it saunder or cotton tree, or candlewood for that! 'Tis big enough to make a boat, and a boat 'twill be," persisted

Sparhawk, his gnarled features twisting with his efforts as he stooped. "The tender's small, and there's work to do where the *Rose* can't go among the rocks—eh, Roger?" he questioned slyly, peering up to the lad's face.

"Nay, Bill, 'tis my first voyage. I know not these waters nor where a ship might go," Roger answered good-naturedly, betraying nothing.

Save for the long rest at midday, the work went on till the sun was lost behind the trees. The hillside and a wide path through the swale beyond were roughly cleared. From its cathedral height the dark-crowned cottonwood had swung in a great arc downward and stretched its mighty length upon the skaken earth.

At the signal of the dawn Roger woke and looked longingly at the river; but as he sluiced the water over arms and face, the fishes that nibbled at his submerged hands gave him a curious feeling of numbness and distress. Without reluctance he turned back to the work upon the clearing.

The camp was again busy at its toil. The twisted branches of the fallen tree were chopped and sawn away till the monstrous log could rest close along the uneven earth. Lesser boughs, cut to the length of torches, were stripped and set to dry in the hot sun. Tom the carpenter and Gedge, half way between the severed base and the first outreaching limbs, struck again with strokes that came like clock beats in regular iteration.

From a spring high up among a tumbled mass of grass-grown rocks, Roger brought water tinged

with red ochre and warm as fresh-drawn milk, and dashed it with New England rum. The men drank eagerly the mild dilution, and steaming, went again to work, cursing the sand fleas and the stinging flies, and scowling vengefully upon the prostrate trunk.

Discontent burned hotter than the heat in the little eyes of Fangs.

"We didn't ship for woodchoppers," he snarled at Gedge.

"Ye shipped to obey orders." The Captain's tone fell on the grumbling as a foot would crush a crawling moth.

" 'Tis this here hellish heat, sir," volunteered Gedge, brushing the perspiration from his lids. " 'Tain't the work."

"The heat! Are ye a set of sickly infants to cry out at a little heat!" The Captain drove his sharp adze along the upper side of the log, planing the soft wood with a dextrous motion. "Be thankful, Gedge"—he fixed his eyes upon the garrulous sailor —"that thou'rt not cutting lumber in the snows! There's a fine periagua hid within this bark. If it's sailing ye want, my men——" He swept a glance up and down the listening group—" 'tis this boat will take us where we're going. The sooner 'tis done, the sooner we're there."

The crew shook off the stifling oppression of the air as if someone had loosed them from confining bonds, and bent to their work, digging out the white fibre with better speed.

"Heat! Poor weaklings! If ye'd ever frozen in the woods of the Kennebec with a gale off the

sea driving the sleet in your faces, and your hands cracked and bleeding from the frost till they were numb upon the axe, then ye'd not curse the heat. When I was a lad I stored up cold enough to last a lifetime."

"Hell's own country, be that north coast of Massachuset colony!" Gedge put in with a swaggering air of knowledge. "Cold and salvages and no chance for anything but to starve and die."

"Thou'rt wrong, Gedge." The Captain's strokes did not cease upon the wood. "'Tis a hard life and a perilous, but a man hath a chance. Give me the new world. 'Twas there I learned what brought me where I am. Thou shouldst have lived at Pemaquid with my mother." His lips closed upon each other firmly, and he nodded an emphatic assent to his own words. "Here, thou villain—art gouging like a child. Slant thy knife; cut not so straight upon the grain—and keep within the line."

Fangs obeyed with startled alacrity, the fire beneath his lowering brows unsmothered.

Tom the carpenter grappled a black box out of his short leather breeches and dusted snuff liberally about his wide nostrils.

"'Tis a clean life—with good smells," he said, shoving the box among the stored treasures of his pocket. "I've heard say there's virtue in the fir trees makes a man longlived."

"Aye," answered the Captain heartily, "balsam and bayberry make a savoury odour, and rocks, and the sheep, and winds and sun, be decent company. And when he digs and sows, a lad sees more than

maize and hemp and pompion seeds—he sees his future—marks out a trail to follow."

The work was going on apace. The humid air had become vital with a tingling vigor. The Captain marched from end to end of the boat-length he had apportioned, and his hand here, his voice there, sped the task. Something in himself had set the pitch for effort. The thought of snows blown in whistling winter storms and heaped upon the hills of Pemaquid cooled their glowing bodies and loosened the dryness of their throats.

"A man may be what he will in the new world; 'twas thus my mother taught us." Captain Phips still spoke, his voice galvanizing laggard muscles to renewed exertion. "Not that saying a worm's a silken purse can make it so," he added with a twinkle in the shrewd blue eyes, "but there's much silk raw and uncombed may yet be carded and spun."

Gedge tucked a folded tobacco leaf within his cheek.

"Be there periaguas, sir, upon the Kennebec?" he asked respectfully.

"Aye, but they call them gundalows," the carpenter put in knowingly. "'Tis an Eyetalian name, though Manuel says it otherwise."

"'Twas not by making dugouts on the Kennebec I served my prenticeship for this periagua!" The Captain straightened himself to watch the cutting at the far end of the log. "'Twas a trade learned by a winter fire when I cut trenchers of the maple wood to hold my meat and porridge." He smiled as his glance came back along the line. "Here,

Fangs, man, drink thyself and give thy mates the pannikin. Wast ever caught by Indians? Thou hast the look of one the savages have tortured. Ease off there and man the water keg. Thou art no carpenter. Tom will be best without thee."

A fury of remembrance convulsed the fellow's evil face. Venom gathered in the little eyes; he seemed to shrivel with an inward heat of dull malignance.

When the noonday hour released them, axes dropped, tossed in a ringing heap, and the men slept like children, waking only to eat and straightway fall again into the prone slumber of forgetfulness.

Roger, lying still inert after the first weight of sleep was gone, saw dreamily, between lids half unclosed, the Captain busy about the giant log. A lizard darted like a tiny flame around the buttressed stem of a strange tree, repeating in his slender length the gorgeous coloring of lilies seen beside the spring. A snuffling near at hand widened the space between the drowsy lids; an investigating snout, with bright eyes set above, poked from a little copse of weeds whose leaves had closed in quivering haste. The lad half stirred. The little beast took warning, rolled himself into a scaly, armored ball, and Roger strove to wake and see if this quaint transformation were a dream, but the lids fell fast together, pressed down by healthful weariness, and when the big voice of the Captain roused them cheerfully, he looked about him wondering where he was.

In the afternoon Tom was set to direct the work,

and Captain Phips, taking Fangs and two others of the weakest, departed in the tender. Before sundown, Maccartey was with them, coming up from the stream in a drenching downpour, with the water running in small rivers from his curling length of hair. The men had stripped, and lounged on moss and stumps outside the umbrella-like shelter of the trees, while the warm flood poured gratefully upon their burned and thirsty skins.

As the shower ceased, everywhere could be heard a running of quick rills. Each leaf that stirred emptied its verdant cup in a little flood, and the brook, the river's tributary, that had been shrunk to a mere creeping line between its parching banks, rose till the yellow grasses dipped in its tumbling waves.

Maccartey gazed with amiable curiosity upon the group and turned an interested face to Roger.

"Troth, lad, is it white monkeys thou hast here, come down from the branches to cavort with us? Here now, make haste." He set his look once more upon the men. "Into your clothes there. Tom, I'm ashamed of ye, settin' out here like an old baboon in the face o' the day!"

The rowers fastening the tender to the bank below laughed loudly.

Dressing was scarce a task, but Gedge was fain to find it burdensome. As he covered from sight the blue tatooings on his roughened skin, he resumed the grumblings of the absent Fangs, ridding himself with an angry jerk of a striped spider ensconced upon a fold.

His mutterings grew crosser while he searched for the spider's mate, and "tyranny" and "slaves" sounded often in his scolding monologue. Once he halted, eying Roger with bitter indignation, disdaining the fineness of the sunburned skin upon the bared arms. The lad was straight and supple, wholesome and good to see, firmly built with strength of sinews and elastic youth; but Gedge was in an evil mood.

"Work! 'Tis simple talk for them to speak of work who take or leave it as they will! What does Roger know of work—who's got a fortune waiting for him when he will—and Captain Phips, who's he to talk of work? What's a captain's work!"

The sailors restored to half-clad comfort and less fear of poisonous insects, lounged again, rummaging their pockets for tobacco and small hoards of snuff.

Maccartey had poured a quantity of the broken leaf from a cormorant pouch into the palm of his hand. He packed his pipe bowl slowly, disregarding the grumbler, and labored in vain to strike a spark with flint and tinder from his box. Suddenly he paused.

"Hold thy peace, Silas Gedge, or I'll duck thee thrice running and choke the spleen from out thy greedy crop. Work! 'Tis Captain Phips knows all there is to know of work—none other better. Which of ye now——" He let his eyes wander about the circle, gathering up the attention of each man. "Which of ye now," he repeated, "ever fought with half the odds he's had to face!"

"There 'tis; the luck's with him." Gedge had dropped on the slope, drained almost dry already where the hot soil shed the moisture. "Luck's with him," he said the second time, with more philosophy, spinning a Portuguese coin worn thin with use. " 'Tis an easy job being captain and setting others to do the tasks."

Bill Sparhawk, twisted like a withered cactus stalk, drank and chewed and placidly arranged a pack of cards to dry upon a stump. He turned as Maccartey answered, the knave of hearts forlornly damp between his thumb and finger, and looked up to where the mate was seated on the mighty frustum of the cottonwood.

The spark had come at last and Maccartey drew with solemn content the first puffs of the strong-flavored smoke.

"Easy work!" He quoted the words of Gedge with scornful deliberation. "Easy work ye think it! And easy work it may be for an ignorant, barefooted shepherd to make himself commander of a King's ship and the friend and crony of great dukes—with private audience of the King himself."

"How is't ye know that?" asked Sparhawk. "Are ye from the colonies? By y'r name ye should be out of Ireland or——"

"Ireland and Scotland and a grandfather from York that went to Boston when I was a dimpled thing in arms." Maccartey sucked upon his pipe, his gaze quizzically upon the knave of hearts. Laughter broke again upon the stillness. Roger's eyes twinkled, regarding the tough frame of the first officer of the *Rose*.

" 'Tis from himself I'd some of it," Maccartey went on, "and more from Jotham Blaize, who came from Pemaquid—where was the Captain's home."

The men settled to hear, childishly ready for a tale.

" 'Twas a handful of men came out of Bristol and landed beyond the furthermost settlements. Many died there—that had not died of a pest upon the voyage. The Captain's father, a gunsmith he was in Bristol and a poor man as any, lived not long after. So were left but the goodwife and a monstrous family of children like to starve. Wast ever in Pemaquid, Silas Gedge?"

"Not I. Was washed ashore one summer time by Wells. 'Twas a place wild enough for me—and in great fear of salvages."

"Wells hath communication with the towns, but Pemaquid—'twas most like a forgotten isle. The Captain was a little lad—amongst the youngest—but 'tis said he cheered them and told his mother 'I will grow up and build a mansion for ye all,' so that his brothers laughed and were heartened by his pluck. Faith, I can see the little chap, half frozen and half fed, and game for anything." Maccartey sat erect, the smoke curling from the pipe in his hand to trail in a soft cloud toward the stream.

The men nodded.

" 'Twas a life to make or kill him—herding his sheep among the rocks and by the woods —in danger ever—of wolves and Indians—till he was come as old as Roger here, with more wolf

skins than learning to show for trophy! And never change—nor any to give him hope of change. When he would say, 'I shall not always stay in Pemaquid,' the settlers laughed. And when, at last, he 'prenticed himself to a ship carpenter, they laughed again to see the lad ambitious—only his mother would not say him nay. 'Twas a 'mazing large family. A score of brothers he had, and sisters besides—and the oldest of all, that were men grown, left behind in England! 'Twas a brave woman I'm thinkin' brought all those children into the world, and with babies in her arms came to the wilderness where there was not so much as a corn blade for food and naught but water to drink, and kept a stout cheer for rough weather and mild. God—'twas a wonder! She died in Pemaquid. 'Tis a grief to the Captain she never saw the mansion he had promised her. He was but a ship carpenter—then—but 'twas in him to be more."

" 'Twas luck," Gedge murmured obstinately. " 'Twas luck that made him rise."

" 'Twas work—an' brains at the back of it, ye blitherin' fool! How many of ye—" Maccartey's voice hurled the question at them with rampant energy—"would have left the sheep he'd tended till none believed he could do better, and learnt a trade? And which one of ye, a man grown that couldn't spell his name, would ha' gone to Boston where the ignorant be most despised, an' carried himself so none could scoff! 'Twas there first he learned to read and write, though he was brave of manner and withal so gentle, he was sought of them

that knew good wine from cheap. And so it came he married a gentlewoman—who thinks no other man be good enough to shine his buckles."

"An' I could stay at home and stuff my carcass from a silver trencher I'd work no more!" Bill Sparhawk had dried his cards and shuffled them now together with a shake of the head that resigned a hopeless puzzle.

"While there's work to be done Captain Phips 'll take no ease," Maccartey answered shortly.

Roger watched the fire—that burned ill—and said but little. He was far from the island camp, his thoughts now in Boston, now in Pemaquid. Once a great snake swung from a branch and devoured some crumbs left from a sailor's meal, then coiled away out of sight. He did not stir nor give it heed. "The snakes have no poison," Captain Phips had said—and he believed implicitly. Gedge had not believed, but killed the first he saw with frightened haste. To the others, despite of grumbling and distaste for toil, the Captain's words sufficed. What he said partook of the potency of that they called his "luck." Nor did they put great faith in tales of youthful poverty. Every man knew that there were poor and there were rich, just as there were ants and there were dragon-flies. How could you make one of the other?

Talk went on in a vein less hard for the credulity. Pirate tales, more smartly seasoned for monotony than Maccartey's yarn, were flung out with lush profanity.

"Aye—the 'Lady' they called him. He stuck

at nothing." Gedge raised his voice to match his hideous climax. "He drove them 'neath the lash to bear their treasure and stow it on his ship, and then he cut them up and fed them to his dogs."

Roger heard little of what went on about him save for an occasional outburst of shout or song. The Boston-bred lad, worshipping afar, and now brought within the magnetic radius of his hero's presence, had never before realized that hero's humble origin. Was it true that the New World meant freedom for a man to rise above the station where Providence had set his lot? A strange thought, startling to the boy, but appealing with the thrill of inspiration to that sense of justice, already the strongest impulse of a many-sided nature.

But chiefly his imagination dwelt among the pines and hemlocks of the rocky shore of Pemaquid, following the boyhood of another lad whose schoolmaster had been hardship and whose patience had been gained among the stupid flocks and in the watchful hours of Indian warfare, and the unmoved endurance of incredulous jeers. How many years, beneath the cold stars and the colder moon, through seed-time and scanty harvest, the rage of winter and the summer's drouth, he must have looked off to the unquiet sea, biding his chance, a clamouring force within him quickening his blood even amidst the gentle breathing of the huddled sheep!

The picture did not fade as the weeks came one upon the other, bringing the end of their persistent toil. Captain Phips had an added power in the

lad's eyes that saw the strength of his achievement. The periagua grew slowly under the shaping hands. It was the Captain himself who worked hardest and longest, although the slow fever born of the nights alternately parched and chilled him, biting at his muscles in vindictive nips of pain. Among the men he portioned out the bitter Jesuit's bark, watching each dose consumed, and letting none suspect how sorely the disease laid hold on his stout frame.

Roger was often at the ship, a trusty messenger between Maccartey and the camp. Of the loutish Jacob Munch he saw but little, the two lads changing places with the change of leader on the boat.

Hunting parties scoured the jungle toward the summit of the spurs, and Roger grew inured to strangeness, where all was strange. The tops of even the nearest hills were inaccessible. Great forests of ferns made a soft and hopeless barrier, and left no peak exposed whence could be had a view. In the compact enclosure of the woods, the rankness of the land's fertility oppressed him to a kind of suffocation, the sun that worked this miracle of increase fermenting in its turn a quick decay. Beneath the mossy shade, a subterranean fauna seemed to glide and crawl. The horde of parasitic growths, a newly sprouting plant from every shoot or twig, each tiniest thing another's feeding ground, multiplied in grotesque mysteries; great ant hills heaped from powdery dust of lichened vines and fleshy orchid leaves, were ambush of an implacable and murderous foe; hollows in dank obscurity let the steps plunge in tree

trunks dead and fungus-clothed, and stir a universe of harboring life to fierce activity. Great nauseous flowers, like mottled faces of tree-dwelling gnomes, swung down across his path and thrust at him their scarlet tongues. Everywhere the large abundance of the ungirdled earth gave vague offence to senses too powerfully assailed.

But the exhilaration of battle with the wood, the joy of exploration, kept alive the first delight. Dark-shrouded grottoes in a mountain ledge, the cheerful ruin of a Spanish house, the red scar of a fire that burned and died in some dried upper slope of distant mountain heights, these had a charm that rivalled the dangers of the chase.

The Captain went rarely with the hunters, and even in the midst of the rewarding barbecue his eyes forsook the roasting boar to dwell with serious calculation on their unfinished task. Often at the last, while the sailors lay steeped in dull unconsciousness, his thoughts, impatient, wrought upon it ceaselessly, and he slept the vigilant slumber of those whose nights deepen the responsibility of the day.

It was a goodly craft. The rains had soaked it, the sun dried and baked it, seasoning the whole; the thwarts were smoothed and fitted to their ledge; great-bladed oars were fashioned of a harder wood, and still a new day saw new toil upon the cumbrous boat. Yet in the end all was accomplished to the Captain's will and the "brave periagua" crushed the lily pads and floated by the tender on the current of the stream.

That night they feasted on the hill. All day

the tender had plied to and fro bearing water from the spring to fill the casks upon the *Rose*. Now with the companions of his task Roger rested in the camp.

The feast was merry; far into the black hours of the night laughter rose among the scattered groups. Against the new obstruction to its flow the river rippled with a pleasing murmur of surprise. Torches of candle wood flamed upon the darkness of the river, glowing beyond the vine-laced boughs. Thick smoke went swirling into space, mounting in slow spirals from the flares. Through the current shining creatures rose to the lure. The ripples flickered above sunken logs, and dancing swarms of insects swam in nebulous clusters within the light.

Roger gazed eager and speculative upon the place where the periagua was moored within the cove. Would the inert log that had been made a thing to fetch and carry, obedient to the oar and sail, yet bear loads of precious cargo to brim the waiting coffers of the *Rose?* What would it be? Jewels, the gems of Spanish donnas gleaming under the sun for the first time after half a century of dull oblivion? The shining altar vessels of some ravished church of far-off Popish lands? Strange coins and curious fragments filched from other lives of other days? Or had the lost ship been a rightful caravel, owned by honest merchants, carrying an honest cargo of bullion, of proper golden coin or heavy pieces of eight made fast in leathern bags?

One by one the flares went out. In the creeping chill of the lifeless dark the men wound their blankets

closer and huddled back to back for warmth. The sentinel rekindled the sputtering embers of the fire and hugged the smoky blaze. A cold steam hovered above the slipping water, poured itself over the opposite shore, and climbed stealthily almost to Roger's feet. Great bats whirred above his head. Out of the shadows, sunk to blacker night after the torches' glare, he heard the raucous cry of birds that hunted in the dark. As the fire sank, unnoticed by the sleepy sentinel, into a dull shine just strong enough itself to be discovered, he heard the angry baying of wild dogs deep within the forest. The trees dripped steadily; now and then a crash in the stillness set the hanging leaves astir and big drops rained upon his face.

Still Roger thought of the periagua, and of Captain Phips guiding, controlling, mastering all these savage forces in wood and stream and human passions to serve the ends of high emprise. And when he closed his eyes upon the sentinel and the viewless dark, the heavy breathing of the men was thunder of surf that broke upon low-lying reefs. Through the pellucid depths he looked far down and saw a world of glittering treasure, and in the midst a Spaniard, guardian of the trove, who slept upon his side, the golden fringes of his doublet awash within the waves. Sighing for pleasure of his dream, he woke, filling his lungs with a long conscious breath.

Two eyes out of the dark—yellow, glowing upon his—eyes that moved, then vanished, then came again! Nay, 'twas but the moonlight agleam among the leaves that turned there and by their

waving hid the shine. The air grew dimly brighter, then glimmered with the yellow of the palest gold, the tree tops set vaguely, flat as pictures in a book, against the coming light. The gleam touched the gliding dark that was the river, then widening, spread toward the shore whereon the sleepers lay, illumining the boats, spilling along the river's nearer edge, rising in the well of shadow, till the moon sailing clear of the encircling wall of trees looked down effulgent upon the camp.

The sounds died away. Silence, stirred but faintly in the deeper woods, came upon the cryings of the night. The river moved, a glassy stream, all yellow radiance between its palely shining banks. The breath of those who slept sank in long signs, exhaling softly. The mist clung in fine spray on branch and drooping vine and the brave periagua wrapped in its shimmering gold strained more and more upon the flood.

Another dawn and the camp, the bays, the shores of green Hispaniola were left behind. In the abandoned camp the wild dogs battled; within the bay the great crabs crawled in unmolested peace; the shade of the crag with its tree-tops nicked upon the blue fell into a silent pool, and tide and current swirled unseen, contesting forever the noiseless right of way.

The mountains faded to the dark irregular line, became a dim cloud, and were gone. Far out of sight of land, the *Araby Rose* was again the only sail upon the waste. No isle rose to mark the path, no rock, no sandy bar, lifted itself upon

the surface of the flood. The teeming life and wood sounds of the shore changed for the strain of silence and the weight of desolation! The sky, the sea, burned with one light, a white and fervid glow. Upon the deck, shadows, sharp-edged as those of an Italian noon, made shifting lines to mark the glare.

The dark came suddenly, but no dew-laden wind blew cool upon the *Rose*. Cautiously, circling in the void, she waited for the moon; then blossoming like a flower in all the yellow glory of the night, she swam nearer and yet more near to where old enemies of men and ships lay crouched beneath the waves, holding in grim jaws the secret of their quest.

## CHAPTER IV

### "FOR HELL AND THE LADY"

THE periagua lay pitching in a channel between two sunken reefs. On either side, the water boiled noisily, frothing with impotent disgust at each obstruction and returning with senseless persistence to the assault.

The men rested on their oars, sullen and without speech. Roger tried to follow the vanished divers hidden by the dull opaque of the waves, and trails of foam splotched upon the surface mocked the attempt. Half a league away, hovering in the safety of the open, was the *Araby Rose*. The same white glitter burned upon her sails; the same shining desolation stretched unbroken to the rim of an empty world. Through sickness and recovery, seasons of toil and suffering idleness; through days among the submerged rocks when drags and iron grapples scorched the hand that touched them, and days upon the *Rose* when the lukewarm brine hissed upon shrunken planks and steamed in new-washed scuppers, the men of the Company's ship had faced the unwinking glare.

"'Tis little the Duke of Albemarle and his Treasure Company can know of what the Captain hath to try him in this search," Roger thought often, seeing the dauntless and resourceful cheer no hardship could abate.

The crew were troublesome, a treacherous mix-

ture of seditious blood. Those who had worked upon the great periagua had been the indifferent best of an untamed rabble. Only the Captain's fear-naught government averted week by week some grim catastrophe. Of all the horde none had endured so well as those of the New World, sailors from the colonies, and the Indian divers brought from Jamaica for King James to see and rescued from London by Captain Phips. Save in the bay of Hispanolia, the red men had not even sickened; unflinching, stoical, their silence rasped their fellows like the changeless pressure of the heat.

While they dived, Maccartey stood scanning the neighbouring reefs for his next move, and when the Indians, their bodies shining from their hazardous bath, tumbled lithely to place, he opened his mouth to give an order. As the first syllable broke into a violent exclamation, the crew looked up.

Sulky, angrily defiant, they followed the mate's arrested gaze and their expression lightened. Their bodies woke, electrified; their hands laid hold upon the oars with a lively grip. Tongues were loosened and a babel rose to die upon the instant into sharp exertion.

"A Spaniard!"

"A pirate!"

The mate shouted. The heavy boat plunged forward. From the *Araby Rose*, far off across the broken reefs, fluttered the signal of recall.

All the pent energy, fermented in long months of disappointment, burst in Roger's stroke. Excitement rioted in his veins, thrilled outward from the quick and steady beating of his heart, to drive

faster, always faster, the blade against the resisting wave.

With each swing of his body, the stranger, brought into his field of vision, grew larger, more threatening, against the sky. She was moving with amazing speed straight toward a point that divided the periagua from the *Rose*. Once cut off from their ship, and, the lad knew, it would make small difference—Spaniard or pirate. The methods of the privateer and of the rover were vastly similar.

The men strained harder at the bending wood. The divers had seized the oars thrust into their hands and sweat mingled with the sea water upon their glistening backs. Alone of all the crew they had shown neither surliness nor excitement, and now they held to their work skilful, unflagging, with faces whose fixity neither labor nor insult had moved.

The sudden wind was capricious. The sail availed them little. Through Roger's mind fantastic thoughts made rapid procession, oftenest a regret that so rare a race had no spectator but the birds. He felt a dumb anger at Fangs, who sucked the air hissingly through his protruding teeth, weakening as he rowed. It was like him, the lad felt, to have plenty of breath for grumbling and none for work, failing at the very beginning of the struggle.

Their ship was under way to meet them, her sails filling. The light that came and went beneath the new shadow of hurrying clouds showed her one minute with wings grey and old, the next brightening in a miracle of whiteness. A soft commotion

had risen in air and sky, hopeful foreboding of a tropic shower. The stranger loomed momently near, a larger ship than the *Araby Rose*, with a glory of canvas crowning a mighty hull. To slip past the bow of the enemy and make for the open sea, that was the hope of the *Rose*.

"Were't not for us!"

Roger heard the mate's groan, heard an order sharp and explosive. The periagua shipped the seething crest of a wave. Maccartey pulled hard upon the sheet and yelled as the men drove the quivering wood through the green water.

His shouts put life into backs broken with desperate effort, and the *Rose* came down upon them hardly faster than the periagua drove through the fumbling waves. The stranger was moving with still greater speed as the wind quickened into a sharper gust.

The mate's voice bit and stung the panting rowers to a new spasm of wrenching force. Fangs toppled forward with blue lips whitening across a gasping breath. Roger, sliding upon the thwart, tore from the loosening hold the upraised oar lest it trail upon the water, and pulled again with blind frenzy as a lash struck across his back.

The lash was far more a symbol than a fact upon the *Araby Rose*. It saved them now. Nerves sensitive by long immunity woke to the cutting of the thong. The arm of the mate was powerful; not a blow was wasted. In the moment that might have lost them all, he brought them with a live leaping of the boat beyond the line of the stranger's bow.

As the men climbed and fell, were hauled, scrambling and exhausted, upon the deck, Roger saw the black flag broken out at the masthead of the foe. For the smaller vessel a stern chase was the only safety, but to reach the open she must run between the pirate and the Boilers, outmost and worst of all the hidden reefs.

The spent crew drank thirstily, recovering as by a prodigy, and sprang every man to his place. Beneath the focussed energy of the Captain's look the light of battle kindled; in his voice the joy of action glowed and vibrated. The strength of his colossal confidence entered into the ship. The men forgot that the pirate was larger, better armed, manned doubtless by twice their number. No other Captain than William Phips ever went down to the sea that could make of a motley like this such seamen and such fighters. Roger saw and felt it as the sails moved to the sound of the Captain's orders and the *Araby Rose*, leaving the drifting periagua far behind, converged upon the point of contest.

Second by second certainty was made more sure. They could not evade the enemy's swiftly coming prow. As well as the oldest sailor of them all, Roger knew that their remaining hope was a manful death. But like the others, eldest or youngest, he kept steadfastly at his task, undismayed, confident against reason, hearkening to the voice of the Captain.

Jacob Munch alone of all the ship's company was unaffected by that voice. He was stationed with Roger, serving the gunners, and he watched fur-

tively an opportunity to slip away. Roger went swiftly to and fro as the mate commanded, his body tense with expectation, his heart swelling against his breathing, his under consciousness wandering on abstract errands that had to do with peace and pleasant ways. In the intervals, he knew the orders shouted, repeated above his head, felt the jerk and recovery of the vessel in each changed direction, listened to the protesting of the planks straining upon one another, and wondered vaguely why he was set to so mechanical a labour, never suspecting the Captain of softness in the choice of this better shelter of the gun deck.

As the first noise of the conflict broke horridly on the air he seemed to hear the sounds of the same hour at home, the lowing of cattle in the lane, the twitter of swallows by the eaves. Drawing nearer, he waited alert and ready behind the mate.

The pirate's aim was good. There came to the ears a cracking of light timbers and the sudden plop into the spouting water beyond the *Rose*.

"Missed the mainmast," he heard Maccartey mutter.

A shout from above. The smell of gunpowder rank in the air. Around him answer and response, continuous, ominous, antiphonal roar of battle, began and mounted till the rage of men's voices could be heard across the narrowing water. Then and till the end Roger heard as if the contest were the dream, the vision of home the reality. The double consciousness sharpened rather than dulled his vigilance.

The Captain's shout came down to him: " 'Tis

the *Walrus!* 'Tis the ship of Anthony Blount the devils have!" and the howl of the New England men that answered it.

The mate was giving shot for shot, taking the pirate twice 'twixt wind and water in wounds that were patched up promptly with skilled hands.

"Get above, Jacob Munch, and bring me word," yelled the mate.

The slouching figure, already deserting the guns, hesitated, reluctant. Maccartey saw without turning, and with an oath changed the order.

"No: come ye here where I can watch ye. Go you, Roger. 'Tis the yard arm and short shrift ye'll get," he added savagely to the shaking Jacob. "Quick there, ye whelp!" He worked as he spoke, and as he finished, his weapon belched its contents, straining in its terrific recoil.

"Aim for her masts!"

The loud command, the shuffling of feet, the splutter of the gunner's coals, the whistling breath from the torn throat of a wounded man, gleams of fire and the reverberation of the guns, the crash and jar or groan of racked and splintered timbers, the feel of a helpless body stumbled over in the murk, all wrote themselves at once and for always in the lad's brain, each separate sound or sight or touch distinct as graven lines, yet all one shock of clamorous, Heaven-defying madness.

The order carried without a trumpet. The *Walrus* had sheered on her course, standing down at right angles to ram the weaker vessel. A rending of wood and the smell of burning on the *Araby Rose!* No man looked behind at his own disaster

but set his eyes to sight the heavy sticks of the enemy. Thick smoke spread from the plunging side of the *Rose* and swept upward to mingle in a single cloud with the dusk and vapour of the pirate's guns. Through a rift in its blackness Roger saw that a mass of her upper rigging had fallen—her sentient obedience gone at the very moment when she was ready for the blow. As she swerved obliquely to the impact, then swung broadside on, the *Rose* lay fatally open to her fire.

The voice of Captain Phips rose clearer, nerving the brain that heard, the arm that executed. Roger had made his report swiftly and returned as his own ship yielded to her sails and drew square across the pirate's deflected bow. The fire of the *Walrus* had come too late to be deadly. The *Rose*, scarred and torn, was yet not crippled. The volley aimed at her vitals had cleared her as she came about. The sea leaped angrily, spitting under the plunging balls.

Now at the word the side of the smaller ship opened in simultaneous flower, deadly bright—and thunder followed the flame. The enemy was sunk in the hollow of the waves, the *Rose* borne upward on the swell for which she had waited, and this grim reprisal harrowed the deck of the *Walrus*, shredding it in maimed and broken fragments of men.

The wind was fitful, the setting sun withdrawn under clouds. Beyond them rain was falling, beating the sea smoother where the shower had struck. The air blackened momently, and the smoke, noisome with the smell of death, hung low, belly-

ing about the baffled *Walrus* and for a little covering the *Rose* with impenetrable shade.

Had the enemy but been wholly disabled the *Araby Rose* might have kept straight onward leaving the pirate to wallow in her own defeat. Even so the treasure hunt had been in danger from a doubly enraged foe. But the buccaneer was crippled only for the moment; her fallen hamper but temporarily hindered the helm. Escape from the larger ship was still impossible.

The *Rose*, sliding forward, seemed suicidally bent upon opening out the angle between her bow and the pirate's stern. It was no part of the enemy's design to sink an unlooted prize, but to risk further injury from the guns of the *Walrus* was as far from the mind of Captain Phips. Rather, deserting his own vessel, he would hurl his entire force upon the rover's deck.

Weapons had been given out, the gunners summoned above. Grappling hooks crossed, fell short, or caught upon the rails. The pirates were massed forward ready for the spring.

Below the broken poop, where he had shouted his farewells to the *Pelloquin*, Roger was waiting. His forehead and lips were drawn in lines intent and watchful, yet on the verge of the encounter he felt no strong exhilaration but rather, as on the London wharf, a dulness like that of disappointed dreams.

He had dragged from among the implements of their "fishing" a long iron rake. Resting it upon the rail he looked down across the space dividing the ships. As he looked a hand was

thrust from a porthole in the stern of the *Walrus*. In the instant of brief wonderment before it was withdrawn he noticed that it was white and slender.

"Faith—'tis a prisoner!"

It was Maccartey's voice behind him.

The *Rose*, her bow brought abreast of the pirate's lofty poop, had been fastened by grapples at the nearest point of approach, but where Roger stood, the unarrested impetus of her motion was opening out the distance between the two boats. Raising the rake above his head, with all his force he shot it forward. As he leaned far out to make sure of his aim and the teeth clamped upon the pirate's rail, the roughening seas lifted the *Walrus* and drew him sharply outward and up. There was no time to loosen his hold. Foam churned over him as he fell, and in the medley of sound and smoke above, the absence of one figure remained unmarked.

Other grapples had seconded his fruitless effort and checked the drift of the unwilling *Rose*. The space between the two ships was well-nigh closed, where the pirates, smarting in an agony of haste to begin the slaughter, were crowded to the bulwarks. They seemed fairly belted with pistols. More than one gripped his knife between his teeth, his hands free for the passage from boat to boat. The twilight of the clouded air gave to their ferocity something grotesque and ghastly.

There was one gun upon the main deck of the *Rose*. Slowly, hidden by the crowding sailors, it had been dragged to position, filled with a mighty load of grape, and aimed. When the sides of the

two vessels battered jarringly at each other in their closing drift, the throng about the gun separated; full in the face of the maniacal crew of the *Walrus* the charge exploded.

The pirates had pressed thickly upon one another, packed, wedged, welded, in a solid mass of human flesh; some were already upon the rail. As they fell back, the dead upon the living, the mangled under the dead, screams—hoarse, shrill—rose where the triumphant yell had been cut short.

Upon them, leaving no instant for recovery, rushed the men of the *Rose*—and in the onset none were left behind saved the killed, the maimed, and Jacob Munch, hidden within the empty hold and shivering with fear.

At the very moment of the explosion Roger's head rose above the water. He had come up quickly, close under the black hull of the *Walrus*. As he emerged into the foam something brushed across his face. He grasped it, still blinded and half dazed, but holding to it mechanically as he found it was a rope. It was too small for a comfortable grip but it was firm, and he tightened his clutch as the grating of the ships upon each other made its way even through the roaring in his ears. Swinging in their shackles they had closed more and more the space up which he pulled himself.

The rope stopped short at the porthole above. Just beyond, within reach, hung the rake. He seized it exultantly; with a foot in the port he drew himself still higher, and as his comrades hurled themselves from the abandoned *Rose* into the

rallying mob upon the *Walrus's* deck, he was among them.

His sword was gone, his pistol wet and useless, but as he sprang forward he snatched a curved knife from a fallen enemy and pressed close into the group that were nearest Captain Phips.

In the first fury of the attack he was possessed by nothing but the rage of battle. As the fight grew more terrible, his arm more deadly quick in thrust and parry, his double consciousness returned and with it a livelier vision of the contest. He felt the shuddering of the two ships, that hung twisting and pulling as if to each the contact was loathsome. With every wrench and drag at the manacles that chained them they seemed to writhe more closely together and finally to give over the attempt to part, rolling and grinding in impotent recoil.

The smoke drifted, sinking ever lower, and lay like mist on the waters to leeward. The waves piled roughly over one another, driven like wild things in a panic before the ghosts of winds just dead. Above the hidden reefs the breakers foamed high and fell; their noise could not be heard but their frenzied leaping added to the tumult a sinister glee. The distance between them and the cumbrous wooden craft was lessening.

The *Rose* climbed and dropped with the motions of the larger ship, and Roger knew that on her deck, broken and drenched with spray, red pools ran back and forth, mingled in paler streams with the trickle of water.

Beneath his feet the wet planks of the *Walrus* slipped and slid. In the hand to hand scrimmage

new sounds added themselves to the horror. The sound of steel striking steel, of blows given with fists upon yielding substances, of knives withdrawn from flesh, and yet for the lad, as before, each sound distinct as it might be, close in his ear, made but an integral part of the hissing, shrieking mélée.

He was never far from the Captain and as he pressed nearer he was all the time aware of that central figure, terrible in strength, tall, powerful—driving before it the pirate crew.

'Spite of the slaughter of the guns it was plain that the buccaneers still outswarmed their foes. Moreover their forces seemed always augmenting and every addition was redoubtable, savage, a beast of prey brought to a stand in his own lair and fighting to kill. Yells broke from them, gnashing and inarticulate outcry of maddened brutes. One voice was loudest. Drunk with rage, it resounded above the noise of battle:

"Follow me!—On 'em!—For Hell an' the Lady!"

Had the lad heard? Did the imagined words only echo what the voice recalled? He had no time to ask. The shouts sank into growls, to oaths of divers languages snarled between the teeth. The numbers grew more nearly equal. The men of the *Rose*, old and used to war, or young and new to its reality as schoolmen to the wilderness, held their own close upon their Captain's advance and the victory so far was with them. All at once for the foe appeared unlooked-for reinforcement — two black men, their wrists marked by the sores of their chains, their faces blotched with fury, their eyes distended with terror. With a howl horrid

and intimidating they leaped at the foremost figure. Running amuck, great knives in either hand, they drove back the invaders by the very devilishness of their aspect, the fear-crazed violence of their onrush.

In this sudden wavering a trumpet call—the voice of Captain Phips above the pandemonium, the voice of a victor mustering to the pursuit:

"Forward! Don't give the dogs an inch!"

Around the three, from both sides the others rallied, the pirates renewed in courage, filled with the lust of carnage, stabbed by the horror of death; the followers of Phips grimmer, less noisy, showing the discipline of the King's Captain who had first built ships and then commanded them. On the strong features of the New England men a hardness like rock petrified the grimness.

With the sharpness of a weapon stroke the memory of the white hand seen at the port-hole below pierced the absorption of Roger's mind. It sent him with fiercer will upon the dire recovery of the enemy.

So for a space the hewing and hacking went fearfully on, and neither gave by so much as a sword's breadth. Then a thin arm of light reached out of the west and fell upon the Captain. The men of the *Rose* broke their silence, cheered with a wild burst of sound that filled the twilight with a glorified frenzy, unearthly as the battle cries of gods. The pirates answered with a forward spring upon the very bodies of their foes,—bodies unyielding, rigid, advancing without pause, warding, driving, killing, as they moved. The eyes of the

Captain burned steadily against the light. The two black men were down. The leader of the pirates stooped and with an upward thrust struck at the Captain's unprotected side under the upraised arm.

The lad was quick but his own thrust was not near enough to prevent the blow. His knife clashed upon the pirate's blade that turned lightning-like to answer him. The deep chest of Captain Phips swelled with a mighty breath and with a roar he charged upon the remnant of the savage pack.

Roger heard and knew, would have followed, would have shouted, but sound and motion failed him and he fell; and as he fell he saw, beyond the bestial clamour, the slaughter, and the grewsome play of deadly blows, the clouds crack in radiating lines from the horizon and the yellow sunset light glow visibly, blinding and glorious, across the heaving sea.

## CHAPTER V

### ON THE SHIP OF THE DEAD

THE waves lifted and fell in gentler agitation. The moonless, West Indian night was alight with stars and the quick-breathing ocean caught them in the smooth cave of curling waves, drowned, lost them, and brought them forth shining more clearly for the brief eclipse.

The *Rose*, withdrawn from the dangerous spouting of the Boilers, rocked with the rocking waters. Floating slowly nearer and nearer, minute by minute, the *Walrus* gained the hidden reefs.

Roger, stretched upon the deck, his head sunk in the folds of the mate's cloak, opened his eyes upon the stars. For a long time his gaze sought the silent comfort of the sky. The night brushed gentle puffs of air across his hot forehead and burning lips, and at length he drew deeply into his lungs its reviving coolness, and cried aloud in the choking cry of unexpected pain. Slowly he lifted his hand and felt the bandage rudely knotted on his head.

"Then 'twas not a dream," he said half aloud, half within himself.

A groan near at hand answered the muttered words.

"Who is that?" he asked, still indistinctly.

" 'Tis me, lad—Bill Sparhawk. Dost mind my grunting?" The phrases came in spasms mingled

of oaths and loud-whispered sighs. "A little noise is ease to pain."

"Was there a fight, Bill?"

A chuckle that spluttered into a choking cry like Roger's was the response.

Both lay still and the chuckle renewed itself.

"Listen, lad—'twas a Prodigy—'twas a fight of a thousand lifetimes. 'Twas——" The choking voice went off into a paroxysm of unconscious blasphemy, searching for adequate expression. "Why, damn thy boots with me, lad, 'twill make the Captain famous forever!"

The voice, groaning and chuckling by turns, meandered in pleased reminiscence, monotonous, rising and sinking like the waves. Roger heard it as he heard the sea. He was going over the fray for himself.

Suddenly he cried out again and sat up. An invisible hand thrust him back, scorching his temples with a white-hot flame.

"The Captain! Where's the Captain?" he called despairing. "Where—— Did they get the prisoner?"

"Lay still, lad, lay still. 'Tis often so with fever." The groans ceased; Sparhawk's tones bore rough concern in the command. "Lay still, lad."

"The *Walrus?*" Roger was stirring upon the coarse pillow, striving again to rise.

"The *Walrus* 'll never hurt nothin' more! Rest easy——"

"The Captain! I must see the Captain!" The outcry was sharp with the agony it cost. "Captain Phips!"

"Who calls the Captain?" A light moved down from the shattered poop and a lank figure was discernible by its gleam. The mate bent over and held the lantern closer to the white face staring into his own.

"Is it delirious the boy'll be!" He touched the hot forehead below the bandages and wagged his head dolefully as he straightened himself.

"I'm not delirious, Maccartey. Did you search the *Walrus?*"

"Aye, lad, and no. The time was short and she'd 'mazing little aboard worth the saving—liquor and food mostly. I'm thinkin' she's a hiding place for treasure somewhere about these islands. She'd be after starting on a fresh cruise maybe—or smelling out our gold and jewels—that we've never found." He spoke soothingly, with a hint of bitterness in the humour of the last words. "She's had the luck she deserved—no less. We set the match to fire her; she's driftin' on the Boilers. 'Twill be a merry sight——"

"The arm—Maccartey, the arm from the port-hole! Did you find—— Did you save——" The lantern swung wildly between them as Roger's grip tightened.

"God in Hivin, lad! I forgot altogether." The horror in the mate's voice changed instantly to reassurance as he tried to push the boy back upon the deck. "Quiet, now—— 'Twas but a murderin' pirate! And 'tis too late for fretting. The world's well rid of the lot. Rest now and sleep."

"Sleep! I tell you, Maccartey, 'twas no pirate! I must see Captain Phips." Roger rose to his

feet, and despite the urging of the mate's arm, maintained his place. "Take me to him, Maccartey—now. I *must* go."

There was one weak spot in the discipline of the *Araby Rose*. From the moment when Roger had emerged upon the deck of the ship clad in the garments of Jacob Munch, Maccartey had loved him as devotedly as he hated the surly Jacob. Anxiety made him pliant. He wound one sturdy arm about the lad and took half his weight, helping him across the newly washed deck to the companion hatchway.

"The Captain's below," he said briefly, "I'll call him."

"Take me to him." Roger's feet were already on the ladder.

"Pore lad—'tis the fever," repeated Sparhawk to himself, and again his groans merged into profanity so violent that the watch silenced him.

"Cap'n's at work. Shet up, can't ye!" he shouted angrily.

The skylights were open above the Captain's head. The lantern with the glass window was set upon the table and threw its glow across the chart whereon was pricked off daily the tale of their empty soundings among the reefs. Bottles and spice boxes were marshalled beside it and the pewter tankard waited the end of labour. The frown that usually followed the grievous record of long failure was less deep to-night. One danger the fight had lessened—for the time. Men are not quick to mutiny under a victorious Captain.

"Here's Roger, Captain Phips—says he must speak with ye."

The Captain sat leaned forward in his great chair, his wounded side eased away from the hard arm, his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the parchment.

At the mate's voice he looked up, his smooth face wrinkling in surprise that sharpened quickly to alarm. The boy was white to ghastliness, save where a streak of red had been imperfectly sponged from his temple. The effort had turned him blind and his own words seemed to come from far spaces, and sounded faintly in his ears in a forceless tinkle.

"There is a prisoner—a child or woman, alive on the *Walrus*, Sir. We saw it—an arm through the port—Maccartey and I——"

"I forgot—with so many wounded to patch up. I forgot entirely and altogether," broke in the mate. "But 'tis too late now."

The Captain had risen. His look Maccartey had seen before.

"The boat! And pray God you're not a murderer!" he commanded fiercely. "I give you two minutes!"

With his left arm he supported the lad to a bench nearest the door and brought brandy swiftly.

The boy's lips wetted themselves and moved.

"You'll not go, Captain. You must not go. Maccartey and I——" The attempt ended in silence and he swallowed again a mouthful of the cordial, trying to pull himself upright. "I thought —it was he—of the wharf—the Lady——"

He had dropped limply and struggled for what seemed an eternity of wretched dreams before he found again both sight and speech. The repulsive presence of Fangs was beside him and miserable trickles of water ran into his eyes as he tried to look beyond the ape-like figure and discover where he was.

"What are you doing?" he demanded curtly, dashing aside the fresh stream of water that blinded him.

"Sopping yer head to bring ye to—Cap'n's orders," answered the man offensively, his grin incarnate of a mean dislike.

Roger did not listen. Remembrance had seized upon him. Fangs' replies to his question were wild and confused. It was evident the fellow had plied himself freely with the Captain's brandy.

"Terr'ble pretty—cabin! Don't have—s' fine—'n fo'c'stle! Sure death! Drink all—sure death to Cap'n an' mate of —*Araby Rose.*"

He had poured himself more from the half-emptied bottle and leered at the prostrate lad as he started to gulp it down.

The toast was arrested undrunk, the liquor swam among the fragments of the glass.

"On deck—on deck—you blasphemous scoundrel—— Go!"

Roger was on his feet. Rage lent a fictitious strength, and the mutinous sot was cowed. He obeyed muttering.

"Little more—'zertion—kill ye—Cap'n said, 'Keep 'im quiet.' I say, 'Let 'im go.' One more

out of way. Cap'n—mate—lad. Too much—gentleman—f'r our—business—th' lad!"

The mumbled words conveyed nothing to Roger. He was attempting to reach the ladder. As he grasped it the pain grew fiercer and he bit his teeth through his lips as he drew himself from step to step. More than once his hands relaxed their hold and his body rested inert, face downward, upon the steep incline, but the draught from above brought him each time to his senses, to greater effort and sorrier pain. The stars looked down upon him and he pulled himself higher in a well of darkness that seemed deeper as he strove.

In the boat the men were at first silent. The sailors rowed doggedly. The Captain neither moved nor spoke.

"If the slow match stayed alight the ship is now afire." It was the mate's protest, distinct only to the Captain's ear. "'Tis a risk the company 'll not thank ye for runnin'," he added boldly.

"The Company's not a fool—like thee! Had I not come, thyself had prayed me for the boat. Hold thy peace, man!" The Captain said no more. The mate became again the under officer, sailorwise, respectfully waiting on the motions of his superior.

The waves tossed and then engulfed them, and as they rose skyward or dropped away into the hollows, their ship grew more and more remote, the twinkle of her lamp oftener quenched than seen.

The growing turbulence of the water showed that they neared the reefs. The oars wavered as the shouting of the breakers broke full upon the hearing. The Captain felt the slackening before the stroke was finished.

"For your lives—pull!" he yelled above the roar. "Pull for the *Walrus!* We'll make it yet! All—together—pull!"

The lost instant was regained. The boat thrilled to the fervour of the rowers. With Captain Phips to drive the warm blood through their sluggish veins worse men would have dared worse odds.

It was not the *Walrus* they wanted; it was the *Araby Rose*. But for the time not a soul of them remembered his own will. Each wrought his utmost, wreaked his full strength upon the weight that balked his blade, and before he knew whither his frantic struggle bore him, he looked up at a sombre shape towering colossal in the night—the *Walrus*—licked already by flecks of foam thrown from the hungry rocks.

She was keeled a little toward them and in her shrouds were strange shadows of the dark. The Boilers shrieked, flinging the whiteness of their spray far up to shine against the blackness of the sea beyond. Upon the great ship was silence and the moving shades born of men's eyes that look with fear. Nothing else but a thin curl of smoke, faint and dimly guessed, that crept upward along a crippled mast.

The mate pointed.

"It's myself will go," he cried, "ye shall not risk——"

The Captain put him aside.

"Where was the port?"

"Below our bows—somewhere aft—but on which side——"

"This—of course, where we grappled."

The voices made an indiscriminate roar with the sound of the waves. The boat plunged frightfully, shipping the crests of billows churned up by the wallowing of the wreck.

The rope still hung from the porthole.

"Gedge—here. Climb and look in."

"Not into—a ship—full of corpses!" The man cowered away from the Captain's order. "Mayhap—a witch—flung out the rope."

Gedge was of lighter build than the others. Captain Phips left to Maccartey the tautened line, and lifting the fellow beneath his arms, held him. The mate steadied the boat, as best he might, by the hanging cord, and swung upward the lantern to the man whose terrified features glimmered above him. The *Walrus* was sunk so low that as the boat was carried higher by the swell, Gedge's eyes stared straight at the round black hole whence the rope depended.

At the moment when he would have raised the lantern to its level, the ship heeled still farther, lying over heavily to the breeze, and the deadlight slammed, closing in his face. The man's teeth chattered.

The boatswain, who with Maccartey had fastened a staunch grip upon the rope, loosed his hold and the hull of the vessel slid past them as the wild chanting of the breakers woke to new violence

under the wind. The pirate ship was moving faster on the rocks.

The second attempt proved futile like the first. The man held the lantern with the blaze full in his own face and the light shook as he held it.

" 'Tis empty," he panted.

"Look again." The Captain's grasp clamped him like a vice.

"There's nothing—Captain Phips—'fore God—let—me—down—my ribs—are breaking," he shrieked. "Let me—down."

"Cast up the grapple." The Captain had released the trembling Gedge. The grappling line, coiled under a thwart, was dragged forth and his own hand threw it swiftly, catching the hook upon the bulwarks.

"Ye'll not go now, Captain! Whoever 'twas is among the dead by this." The sailors heard the mate's pleading.

"We'll not wait—she's sinking," they yelled responsive.

The Captain turned, the scorn in his furious command putting some heart into their craven bodies.

Maccartey had pressed resolutely forward, ready to ascend. He fell back at the Captain's gesture of denial and laid hold upon the rope that steadied them to the ship. His right hand snatched a weapon from his belt. The boatswain was again at his post, his sinewy fingers fast upon the dragging cord.

As the Captain went over the rail and the men loosened their clasp upon the grappling line to pass

upward the lantern upon a cleft stick, Gedge, flung into the brine at the bottom of the boat, moaned aloud with dread. No voice rose above the bulwarks of the *Walrus*. Grim terror settled below as the Captain disappeared.

On the deck the blackness and the loud mockery of the Boilers seemed the entrance to the devil's dwelling. Of men living in 1686 there was no Christian of them all to whom ghosts and witches, the Devil and his evil angels, embodied and disembodied, were not as real as the thunder and the wind, and infinitely more feared ashore or afloat.

The sweat stood on the Captain's body and dripped from cheeks that were no longer ruddy. As he hurried on his way among the stark, open-eyed and staring dead, his lantern's gleam fell now on grins infernal, now on scowls, and once upon a face dull, inexpressive, with great orbs glaring fixed and awful upon his going. One head in the moving shadows seemed to turn to follow him as he went. The real danger, the fire, the Boilers, the peril of some half-strangled pirate's having revived, ready to spring upon him from the dark shades at the mouth of the companion way, none of these took such hold of the man who was too brave to think of fear while fear faced him and duty was undone as the gruesome thought of the dead crew coming in the guise of their devil-protected spirits to reanimate the corpses once their habitation; and as he groped below, slipping in a clot of blood or stumbling upon a body still warm from the vital spark, peering through the thickening smoke he looked most fearfully for that

hag of hell so dreaded of our fathers, the witch, who might torture even the absent, and whose pact with the unspeakable Sathanas gave her power above mortals to slay, to disfigure, to twist and destroy body and soul alike. What place more fit for Hell's own minions than a pirate ship? But why turn against her master to throw a rope to the enemy? A lure—to draw him from his allegiance to the Company and keep him from the treasure!

He stopped short. The low beams shut down above his head. The water guggled in the hold. He had half wheeled when he remembered the sharp rents "'twixt wind and wave" and the hasty patching. The ship was sinking—fast. The actual danger but hardened his courage. Raising his lantern high, he spied about, examining in haste every cubby and turn as he moved onward.

Sure enough, in the place where the porthole should be was a cabin, but the opening was fast closed, the port screwed tight in its rim.

"'Twas this or next to this." His own voice crept back to him, echoing in the dead air.

No further door gave egress from a cabin. Puzzled, he returned swiftly to the first. The thought of witch work laid cold hands upon him once more, but even in the grasp of the supernatural his shrewd eyes again explored the bare interior, and with a bound he rushed at the bulkhead. The door he had not earlier discovered trembled under his knocking.

He shouted.

The shout came back to him in dismal groans;

the *Walrus* listed farther and the steady inrush of water gurgled underneath his feet. His flesh crawled as the groaning answers multiplied about him. No voice but his own among them all! The door broke before his blow as though its panels had been of glass.

His motions seemed clogged, the time interminable, till through the murk he once more groped and stumbled. The merry crackling of wood greeted him as he strove to regain the ladder. Somewhere a light played fitfully. The close air was hot upon his face, the smoke terrible, hindering his breath. As he struggled higher there came to him a rustling near at hand, the frightened scurry of rats over the dead.

In the current that drew across the hatchway he would have paused to fill his lungs, gathering strength for the final strain, but a meaning sound that followed drove him on. Blinded, he made a staggering progress among the lifeless obstructions that blocked his path. The smell of scorching leather rose stiflingly about him. Rallying all his force, he would have moved faster, rushing forward on the steep incline. But the way was barred; breaking through the heated planking of the deck had burst the pursuing flame.

Below in the boat the mate had answered the Captain's shout. Like the men he had felt certain it was but a cry for help and when no other followed, hope had died in his soul.

Mutiny had grown with every waiting second. Nor was the danger all a superstitious dread. The *Walrus* sank so rapidly, the rope by which they

held had momently, it seemed, to be shortened in their grasp. The fire might reach the magazine; for that the fuse had been arranged. The breakers thundered ever nearer; at any instant the ship might strike the rocks and, plunging, draw them after too swiftly for escape.

Maccartey waited, rigid, a pistol in either hand. In the bow a fallen figure nursed a wounded arm, the boatswain, who a second time had dropped the saving cord. Now the very height and frenzy of unreasoning rage was upon the men—fear, animal, awful. Even the pistols would not control them long.

With the smoke came despair. Its cloud settled slowly. Soon, Maccartey knew, his aim would go wide, would fail. He saw the glare with which his captives watched him, heard the ravings with which they bided ruthlessly the shelter of a starless dark.

He would not go till the last hope was spent. The boat pitched desperately. The *Walrus* settled with grim haste to cheat the breakers of her death. The cloud dimmed his smarting eyes, but he could feel the movement as one man, worst raver of them all, rose for his leap. When the shot sounded the wretch plumped backward, shrieking. A howl came upon the fall, the howl of madness accomplished, madness, Maccartey knew, that no voice but one could tame, no weapon intimidate.

He had faced death before. He faced it now, valiant, invincible, one hand again grasping the rope, the other ready on his remaining pistol.

Once more he called aloud, a shout full and vigorous:

"Captain Phips!"

And once more the jovial breakers broke gleefully upon the wasted cry.

Roger came to himself rolled close under the starboard bulwarks. Of his painful progress from the cabin he had no memory; his whole consciousness was a devouring fear.

Dragging himself up by a belaying pin stuck in the rail, he watched. When the lantern ascended the side of the *Walrus*, he saw the shadowy hint of light waveringly mount upon the distant blackness that was the pirate ship. Gradually his thoughts cleared; the wetness sopped upon his head, cooled by the breath of the night, eased the throbbing and tightened the pressure of his anxiety.

Hour after hour, unseen, he waited. More than once he thought it was all over and for a foolish tale he had slain his Captain. In reality it was not so many minutes as to him it seemed hours, but as the time lengthened, his misery was to be measured by no reckoning known of man. Hour after hour, and still no light had descended from the sinking ship; hour after hour and no sign of life upon the sea!

The smoke grew plain to his straining eyes, smoke and then the flame, a little flame that flickered lightly here and there, growing, rising, catching upon the full spread of the canvas that gave the *Walrus* cruelly to the play of every breeze, lines and traceries of light, spelling out upon the gloom the end of hope.

Yet hope lived. The time had been so long. The Captain could not fail.

Then—the whole ocean bright in an unreal glory and a pyramid of fire flung up suddenly, incredibly, into the night—lofty, terrible as a portent, louder in its rage than the far-off noise of waves upon the rocks—a glare fierce, intolerable!

And quick upon its coming, shouts, from the *Rose* and from the water, wilder than wave or flame, exulting—call answering call across the glittering sea!

"I'll lift her up the ladder!" Maccartey spoke.

"No." The Captain held to what he carried, mounting stiffly, slowly.

The men hung over, crowded about, and startled murmurs grew to cheers, and then hushed questions, and then to cheers again, as Captain Phips stood at last in the enclosing ring.

The unconscious burden that he bore in his arms showed the lovelier for the rough faces pressing near to see.

"They'd locked her in. Poor little maid!" The Captain looked down gently. "Who called to me?" he added. His eyes searched the group.

Roger came forward from the shelter of a boat, where he had waited, walking as one whom joy had made alive.

" 'Tis you—*safe!*" he cried in a fervour of relief, and the big Captain smiled, first at him and then at the maid who still lay white and piteous in his arms. Her slender throat and black hair, blowing softly in the silent winds, made even more fragile the pale transparency of the face. Italian Manuel crossed himself, thinking of some pure saint he had seen carved on her own tomb, but as the

Captain smiled she opened on them eyes wide and dark, and in the great blaze—the death fires of the *Walrus*—that lighted all the deck, she saw first the lad and then the down-bent kindly meaning of the Captain's gaze, and with a long sigh bubbling softly from lips that curved too grievingly for her fair years she slipped again into the darkness of her dream, and heard not the thrill and clangour of the voices that hailed her wakening and sped the passing of the pirate ship.

## CHAPTER VI

### PIECES OF EIGHT

"TOO sharp—too much rocks!" The Indian diver shook his head. The men rowing growled and muttered. The low tide fretted upon hidden barriers rising steeply from the bed of the sea.

Roger felt the weary oppression of their fruitless labour grown insupportable.

The Little Maid sat listlessly in the bow of the recovered periagua, where she had been placed at starting. Her mournful eyes had hardly left the water. The same unremembering apathy in her pale features, in the absent droop of her body, in the expressionless gentleness of her replies.

It was Roger who had proposed that she accompany them.

" 'Twill perhaps cheer her," he had said. And Captain Phips had forthwith given the word. The assent of the Maid was certain. She assented to everything. Her own will seemed lost with the loss of memory and desire. She had settled quietly upon the seat, unresisting, without interest, thanking Roger with pretty courtesy as he arranged a cloak for cushion, and had fallen straightway into silence and remoteness. In all the hours she had scarcely moved. Now, as the Indian spoke she raised her eyes.

"Too sharp—too much rocks!"

"Shut up, and down with ye, ye black devil. In ye go!"

The mate's tone rang with undaunted energy. Roger felt a sudden admiration of the man's intrepidity. A mutinous Indian and a crew ripe for revolt might yet be controlled by a tone so assured. Revolt was certain, not to be wondered at nor prevented. Long day after long day till it was month after month, in hot rain and hotter shine, the periagua had lain among the rocks, the Indians had buried themselves in the nauseous brine, seeking, seeking, what they never found.

"An old man at Port de la Plata forsooth!" The men growled scornfully. "An old man indeed!" And again, "Who was to prove that the old man was not in good truth an old liar as well? Who could say after fifty years where the galleon had sunken, or what she had had aboard? 'Known the spot' had he—cursed old dotard! Better take the *Rose* and get good treasure where the Spaniard doubtless got her own—with a new captain and no soft-headed fools for masters!"

So Fangs, going up and down among his fellows, made ready for the right moment. His tongue was an eloquent one; his wiliness set him above the others in a strength surer than their lustier thews. Well-hinted revenges of his evil past kept them in subjection. He, too, looked at the Indian, thinking rapidly. This was not his choice of a day, but the mate and the boy could be ended here as well as elsewhere. It might be, after all, as good a time as another. The Maid he would have to save. The men were superstitiously set upon the Little Maid.

The Indian faced Maccartey without further speaking. The copper surface of his spare body shone wet and polished in the noonday light. His eyes returned the mate's angry stare unmoved. He had folded his arms.

It was the moment. Fangs unclosed his fingers from the oar to give the signal. It was then the Little Maid spoke.

"Will you get me a sea-feather, Nopomuk?" The dark eyes were raised to the diver's. His look turned downward to meet its gaze. The Maid smiled askingly. The first voluntary words, the first smile since they had found her in her prison on the *Walrus*. The words were no longer expressionless. The smile woke a glow, a tremor, in those that looked.

Suddenly, as in a revelation, the sense of her beauty smote the lad. He neither breathed nor stirred, nor did his voice join the murmur, half spoken, half a sigh, that rose from the men; but always after that day, Roger Verring, at a word, an odour, the sound of breakers, the sight of curling foam, was back among the tenantless reefs and saw the calm monotony of the midday sky, the white frothing of the angered waves, the far blue beyond, and against it all the radiance of that child vision in the bow of the periagua. Strong upon a heart tenacious and passionate always had come the charm, potent, untranslatable, of the smile of the Little Maid.

The mate had dropped an upraised lash. The hand of Fangs closed again upon his oar. The Indian's look, mournful like the girl's, lightened to

meet the smile. He said something in his own language.

Then he poised himself on the gunwale and watched his chance as the tide carried them leisurely in the current between two growing banks of foam. The air was still; the surface of the channel smooth. Beneath them the broken outlines of the reef showed clearly, and the branching plumes waving from their foothold on the rocks. The gay colours glinted through the translucent green. Above the fairest tuft the Indian shot forward, down—vanished. The spreading ripples covered him.

The mate looked at Fangs and asserted himself gruffly.

" 'Twas well for him. I'd whaled the red skin of him into ribbons," he commented.

"I think he was a prince in his own country." The Little Maid spoke again, but she did not take her eyes from the water.

"Well, he's a slave now," Maccartey answered, more amiably. "I'm not sorry thou putt'st in thy word. I take no joy in the beating. 'Tis a straight fight pleases me."

The men moved the oars lifelessly to steady the boat. They showed neither curiosity nor interest in the quest. But now and then a pair of eyes lifted to the Little Maid. Her gaze still held to the place where Nopomuk had disappeared. He had been gone a full minute, hidden by the foam banks.

The hope that lay far down beneath the indifference of the men rose once more to the surface. They peered over the boat's edge craning and

waiting. Roger alone was left of those who watched the Little Maid, and he did not know that he watched her. In the instant when she had looked out of the prisoned deeps of her forgetfulness, he had seen the reality of her, seen her as she had been; and tenderness and fury fought within him, for the sense of her dearness and the sense of all she had endured. Of her beauty he was now barely conscious, as of the instrument that makes the music. Of herself he was possessed mightily, the true self, hidden, mysterious—lovable, individual, of the Captain's Little Maid.

So Roger dwelt upon the Maid, and the men peered and waited, and among them, thus peering and waiting, the diver ascended gasping, laid hold on the boat with one hand, and with the other stretched forth a dripping trophy, a sea plume glistening with drops and fairer-hued than rainbows.

The Maid reached out her hand, speaking again. An angry groan drowned her voice, drowned too the voice of the Indian who answered.

Roger had heard but one word—"guns"—and that he dared not repeat lest he had not heard truly. Nopomuk had grasped the gunwale, but when they looked for him to clamber to his place, he dropped again out of sight.

A certain stir in the impassivity of his face had communicated itself to Maccartey's. The men caught the look and bent again to watch, once more craning and leaning so that the boat toppled dangerously. The seconds went by. The sailors stirred one by one and settled again to the oars. They turned no longer to look at the Maid.

"'Tis a fine task for grown men, hunting nosegays in the sea," sneered Munch under his breath. His stealthy eyes shot an angry glance at Roger. Why should Roger Verring be happier than he, Jacob Munch?

The Little Maid's gaze had gone back to the water. Roger, who was steering, saw an exclamation escape her lips. The dark body of Nopomuk had risen through the soapy foam and was striking out for the boat. As he drew nearer, rigid with endurance, his breath taken quickly in relief, the crew cursed and spat toward the upturned face. Oaths, denunciations, hissed viciously together in a sudden revealing rage. Gedge raised an oar to strike. Fangs, wrinkled to hideousness in the moment of decision, made the signal gesture of slaughter. But the men did not see.

Gedge's oar had dropped. The cry of the mate trumpeted in the face of the placid sky.

"What is it?" asked the Maid. In her look interest had waked. She swayed a little forward to hear the answer.

The Indian lifted higher the heavy block he had brought up in his left hand and tossed it to Maccartey. As the yells exploded about his head his eyes gleamed, and when his look fell on the girl it relaxed into something almost responsive.

"Maid—bring *Rose* luck," he said briefly.

Roger's cheeks burned. The crew had fallen upon the bar, feeling it, shrieking over it; Manuel, weeping, praying, blaspheming, by turns, had kissed it.

"Give it here." Maccartey had seized an iron

hook, and as he regained the prize he struck from one corner the crusted lime and shells in which it was encased. The pure glint of silver came upon the stroke.

Yells again—oaths, ascriptions, howls of joy went up in the frenzy of the shock. Hope strangling in defeat, raised all at once to the height of certainty. Rough embraces crushed to the point of breaking Nopomuk's slender ribs; rapturous blows fell not lightly on his shoulders.

The periagua was headed for the *Rose*, cleaving the waters with the speed of ten. Behind her a buoy floated over the grave of the Spanish galleon, the sea plumes nodding gaily beneath as the empty cask bobbed and turned.

"How did you find it, Nopomuk?" The men questioned as they rowed. Nopomuk answered in solemn phrases.

"One time—dive—see guns." He held up three fingers. "Down—down—deep. Come up. Dive two time—no breath." He made a sign as of a weight upon his chest.

"Are there more?" The men were listening, silenced to hear. "More like this?" demanded the mate.

The Indian spread both arms and drew them slowly forward as if striving in vain to gather into their compass an untold mass.

Cheers interrupted the gesture, jubilant, frantic, loud as the shout of cities when bells ring for victory. Faces blazed, irradiated with excitement. Even Jacob Munch smiled greedily upon the captured bar. Roger's mind had leaped straightway to the Captain.

"I knew it," he shouted, unconscious of his words. "I knew he couldn't fail!" but the shout was lost in the others, and his face clouded as his gaze came back to the Little Maid.

She was withdrawn again into the shadow, more remote, more lost to all human approach, than ever. But a strange disturbance followed into her mournful silence, and though Roger could not see, tears waited beneath the downcast lids and choked the breathing in the slender throat.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE AWAKENING

"The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark."

CAPTAIN PHIPS had scraped from the bar more of the crust, cut from the shining mass within a shred, and carefully tested it. In his own cabin, where the trophy had been brought, he looked doubly heroic of mould, but through his huge frame now there went a slight trembling as of the deeps when the wind is strongest.

Through the open ports the sea showed bravely blue, the inshore blue of the Captain's eyes. His wig he had thrown aside, and as he looked he ran his hand through his short, thick-grown locks and sighed unconsciously, the sigh of a weight relaxed. A sharp breath answered the sigh. His gaze left the sea and searched about him quickly.

"So—my Little Maid! And what's oppressed thee, child?"

The girl had waited at the threshold, her whole body drinking in the Captain's joy, her eyes straining intently upon his face. Though she had been quiet in a mute isolation that shut her from displays of tenderness, her fragility, the wanness not yet gone from her look, the appallingness of her lonely state, and most of all, her strange and utter forgetting of the past, had wrought upon all who saw to draw from each a gentler homage.

Save for Munch, none had spoken irreverently,

or jested, or teased her, and always as he appeared she had shrunk to the side of her nearest friend. This shrinking had roused the coarseness of him to revenge so that his mouth had twice been closed by blows for his half-muttered words.

She came slowly forward, the tempered shine from the skylight and the stronger glow from the ports full upon her white face and straining eyes. The straight figure, finely set together, spite of a coltish slimness, had a new meaning to the Captain, its every motion informed by a definite personality—the Maid herself emerging from the vagueness in which she had been hid.

She was dressed still as a child, though a few more seasons would work sudden transformation, hurrying childhood at a leap past girlish years into forced young-womanhood, the transformation of netted hair and long skirts, exaggerating the reserve, the trim sedateness, of grown-up models. Now the blight of that age-compelling change had not touched her; even the blight of a long misery that had revolted nature itself, destroying memory and leaving her defenceless of traditions, had made no difference in an unconscious simplicity, a childlike directness. She was still a little maid.

From the hour of her rescue until now no questioning had waked in the mournful eyes. At first she had asked for a woman "to help me dress," and looked puzzled when it appeared there were no women in the world of the *Araby Rose*, but she had striven patiently alone with what the Captain could provide, and kept herself daintily.

Once as she slept upon the cushioned bench within the Captain's cabin (she slept much in the earliest days) the Captain had laid his hand upon her head, touching it gently and wondering at the exceeding softness of the dark hair that lay never smoothly and ringed itself upon his fingers at the touch.

The child had stirred, without unclosing her eyes, and spoken in a voice new to his ears.

"Uncle," she had called him in a drowsy undertone full of gay and childish content. "I knew thou'd not forget——" She had struggled to raise herself a little and fallen back, sleep-weighted, upon the hard square of her pillow. "Good—night—Uncle——"

But she had waked unremembering and he had laid stern orders upon the men that none should trouble her.

"Hurry her not," he had commanded. "She is worn with the captivity."

Now as he saw her startled eyes a certain fear grew in him at the sight. Her hands were pressed one above the other upon her chest as if to crush down a terrifying commotion. At his voice tears shook from her lids and slipped in a thick rain down her cheeks.

She tried to speak, pressed the small hands closer, stilling the rising tumult of the breath. Her gaze clung to him pleading like that of a lost animal, asking what her lips could not utter.

"What's amiss, Little Maid? Art on the *Araby Rose* with stout defenders. Naught can harm thee," he answered to the look.

"The—pirates?" The words came stifled with the striving for calm.

"Dead. All dead and gone. Not one can ever come back to hurt thee, child." The Captain moved toward her. His face, florid by inheritance, browned darkly by the sea, softened to a still greater gentleness.

The Maid read reassurance in the look, but she stepped backward as if to escape it.

"Be not—kind. If thou'rt kind, I shall weep—" she said gaspingly, her eyes holding to him through her tears that fell the faster.

She had put out her hand for the door frame, gripping its edges with her slight fingers, and as she clasped it her body quivered, fighting a gallant and unequal battle.

The Captain's cabin was in the poop and opened upon the main deck, where part of the excited crew went chattering and joking about their work, a jovial humour swamping for the time their sullen disaffection. The ballast was being shifted to make room for the first harvest of the treasure. The sails had been set to carry the ship nearer the workers in the periagua.

Fangs, angered at being left behind in the change of men, did not chatter, and as he passed the cabin he gave to the slender figure just within a glance of dull malevolence. Captain Phips saw the look. His own crossed it and the man's eyes went snakily back to the deck. The Captain pushed the girl softly upon a stool and swung the door to screen her from without.

Her face buried itself in the shelter of her arms,

and her frailness was wrung and broken by such suffering as cut lines deep into the smooth face of the watcher.

After a little he came nearer and once more rested his great hand lightly on the dusky hair.

The child lifted her head, laying hold on the rough fingers with both hands, tightening her grasp at the sound of her own voice, in the forlorn appeal of the helpless.

"'Tis only—that—I remember," she said. Her words were low but they came clearly. "How did you find me? Where was I?"

"In a cabin on the *Walrus*," he answered simply.

She unloosed the clasp, raising her hands to push the hair from her forehead and gazing up at him in sudden trembling.

"Where is the *Walrus?*"

"Burned."

She tried to get upon her feet, staring upon him still, with horror fixed in her eyes, in the toneless rigidity of her voice.

"It was my story that he told me—mine. You went into a burning ship—at night—alone—with dead men—to get me——"

Reason seemed gone from the fixed eyes, from the voice, unnatural, without inflections.

"Who told thee that tale?" The Captain's hands closed tightly; a savage light flamed in his face.

"Jacob Munch." The voice gave a little from its awful monotony, but the eyes stared still. "He looked at me—queerly, and watched me. I thought it was to make me angry—but 'twas to see if I remembered."

Strong shuddering came upon her and her hands opened and shut upon themselves pitifully.

The Captain turned swiftly aside to his little cupboard for a bottle and a leathern cup.

"Steady—there. Steady, my Little Maid—" he said anxiously, leaning down to hold the cup closer. "'Tis all over. Art safe now for all thy life." Under his brows rage still burned darkly, but a soothing gentleness spoke in the comforting certainty of his tone, in the very bend of his great frame.

She drank obediently, unresisting, and shut fast her lips that trembled sorely upon each other, her forehead pressed against his hand to which she clung again, her sobbing breath catching and strangling in her throat; and the valiant fight for self-command, renewed with all her shaken force, seemed to Captain Phips a thing of wonder and of pity.

Minute by minute she grew calmer, holding to her protector, listening to his, "Steady—steady now," calmest of all when he said nothing; and when he had made her drink again he lifted her and laid her on the cushioned bench, folding over her with quiet deftness a heavy blanket. Then he waited beside her, the slender fingers still clasped upon his own, until he felt the faint pulse in the wrist beat with a fuller stroke; and when he knew she slept, he slipped away and left her, setting Roger to guard the door, lest noise awake her.

"An' she be not crazed 'twill be no fault of that villain Munch," he added to his order. "Let him not near—nor any other. If she wake, speak comfortably as if naught were strange." But he

himself remained ever within call, fearing the waking.

Then the *Araby Rose* grew silent, orders no longer shouted but passed below the breath from mouth to mouth. Men moved like figures in a vivid pantomime against the line of the bulwarks and the plane of the unchanging blue. A sorry fear was on them, the Captain's fear, told in Maccartey's words and written in the Captain's face.

"She hath remembered—and the shock may kill her," they muttered, whispering as they went and came, scowling anxiously upon the creaking sails, angrily at the unconscious ocean as the long undulations rattled the cordage above their heads.

But it was not for the body the Captain most greatly feared.

The hour wore on in the hush of a waiting that made a tenseness in the air about the cabin where the child still slumbered; another hour began, and the men in the periagua, delving hot and thirsty beneath the unclouded sky, paused in their joyous labour to wonder why the *Rose* that had kept ever near at hand ran far out beyond the reefs without a tack or change, and never a moving of her unhandled sails.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LITTLE MAID

"THEY are not my real aunt and uncle," the Maid began quickly, "but 'tis with them I went to the Carolinas."

She had resisted the Captain's gentle admonition that she sleep again. "I remember. Let me tell you," she had pleaded.

It was mid-afternoon. The sun's rays had slanted more and more upon the *Rose* when the child had opened bewildered eyes upon the Captain's cabin. There was nothing extraordinary in the trim furnishings of the place, but the silver bar still stood upon the shelf-like table let down by swinging brackets, and at the sight of it the colour had risen to her face and she had sat up with an unevenly taken breath, fixing on Roger the look with which she might have regarded a stranger. Her unconscious scrutiny had been so searching that the lad had smiled gently, unable to bear without a change of muscle the energy of her exploring gaze.

"Where is my Uncle Amory?" she had asked at length, encouraged by the friendliness of the smile.

Now, as she talked, Roger saw that the same look dwelt upon the padlocked chest, the gray blankets of the Captain's bunk, the picture of the *Mayflower* tacked above, and knew it for the look of one who questions unfamiliar things.

After a little the wandering ceased and her eyes scarce left the Captain's face, seeming to find there no strangeness but a certain courage for her words.

"What is thy uncle's name?" Captain Phips gave matter-of-fact attention to the clearing of a long-stemmed pipe.

"Richard Amory." The child's hands fastened to the edge of the cushioned bench, and her eyes clung tenaciously to the face of the commander of the *Rose*.

"And the plantation? Where——" The Captain had lighted the coarsely broken tobacco and settled himself upon the chest, motioning Roger to the stool beside the door.

"At Charleston." The child's breath was still uneven. "By the Ashley river—and the Cooper."

"I've seen the old town, not the new." Captain Phips looked up from his pipe. "Was't in the new thy uncle settled?"

"Yes." She clasped her hands tightly in her lap, her gaze never moving from her questioner. "It was very beautiful. Aunt Charlotte was afraid, but we liked it, Uncle Amory and I—to see the wild things—and the water—and not to grow up so soon." The voice broke a little and the hands clasped each other more tightly yet. "Uncle Amory would have it I might forget to sit upon his knee when I grew up—and my Aunt Charlotte, she too liked me not to get older—though she called me 'mad-cap' and 'romp' for being so much without the house." The dark eyes had filled but they held their tears, refusing to let them fall.

"When was it they took thee to the Carolinas?"

The Captain's tone helped to ease the struggle. She waited but an instant, beginning bravely after the pause.

"'Twas when my father died. It was sad in England. Uncle Amory and Aunt Charlotte lived with us there. It was my mother's wish—that we be less lonely."

"Thy father and thy mother be both dead and thy Uncle Amory thy guardian?"

"He is my guardian for the care of all I have—but my Aunt Amory, Aunt Charlotte, hath the charge of me as well. She loved my mother—and Uncle Amory and my father—they were like dear brothers—he could not bear to stay in England after——" Her voice stopped often and she trembled, but each time the effort was renewed, a resolute will shining in her eyes. "His steward was set to care for my home. Uncle Amory's own lands are close by Danesleigh Wold."

The Captain took his pipe from his mouth and seemed about to speak, but he glanced into the bowl as if to see that it was still alight, and replaced it in silence.

"It was lovelier there—than in the Carolinas. I never—forget——"

Captain Phips knocked the pipe, live coals and all, with a comfortable sound on the edge of the chest and went about to fill it with some bluster.

"Was it from Charleston they kidnapped thee?" he asked, as if he inquired, "Didst thou raise potatoes?"

"Yes," she answered swiftly. "I was with Uncle in the fields and a planter came past upon a

splendid horse. There were few in Charleston—and my Uncle loves dearly a good horse. While they talked I went a little away—it was not far— to the edge of the oaks. I was jumping for the moss. It hung so low I thought——" Her hands held desperately to each other and a shivering took her as her voice ran hurriedly along. "A man—like an Indian (but he was not an Indian) seized me. I tried to cry to Uncle, and he was talking there so near—I could hear what he was saying——" The slender fingers were knotting and unknotting upon one another.

"Did the man blindfold thee, child?" Again the Captain's voice gave her courage. The fingers unlocked their grip and she went on steadily.

"There were two; one came after the other had thrown something over my head. That was why I could not cry out—loud—and they carried me away hastily. And I could not hear Uncle's voice any more. By and by we were in a boat. Then they talked."

"Couldst hear what they said?" The Captain interrupted with some eagerness.

"They were talking about me." She leaned forward on the cushioned bench, a feverish colour warming her cheeks, her eyes dilated with remembrance. Roger insensibly bent nearer, absorbed and waiting. The wrath he had felt on the London wharf, a thousand-fold hotter now, devoured him.

"One of them would have killed me and taken my scalp there in the swamp. 'They'll lay it to the Indians and 'twill make us safe', he said, but the other would not. I could not understand——"

Her face had grown white again. Her words came in thick-breathed phrases. "For when one pushed me with his foot the man who would have killed me swore at him. 'Remember the witch!' he screamed out as if affrighted. 'Tis for all, the curse, if the pledge be broken.' Why did he fear to have me hurt if he would kill me? I could not understand." Roger leaned still nearer, a fierce intentness in his attitude. "The one who had kicked me swore terribly—'When ye serve the Devil, why care for a witch?' he said, and he sneered, laughing. 'We've got the *Seaflower*. What's promised over? A rotten hundred! I'd not seen the wench when I took the pledge. She'll bring more in the Indies—and a murder the less on your soul! And mayhap the hundred into the bargain!'"

She repeated the speech of the ruffians monotonously as words said over to herself many times before.

"That man, the one who would sell me for a slave——" She spoke again in her natural voice —"he was their Captain. They called him the 'Lady'."

"It *was* he! I was sure of it!" She shrank, startled at Roger's low exclamation. "What did theywith the *Seaflower?*" he demanded impulsively.

"'Twas sunk when they took the *Walrus*," she answered, watching him fearfully as if wondering at what he said.

He had drawn back contritely. The Captain replied to the wordless question.

"The lad saw the rascal in London and knew him for a scoundrel, and the master of the *Seaflower*.

He'll tell thee of it later," he interpolated, softening the frown he had turned on Roger, as he saw the lad's evident distress.

The child's gaze had gone back to Captain Phips.

"He was worst of all—he was cruel——" Roger looked indignantly at the Captain. How could he let the girl go on if the telling of her story cost her such suffering! But William Phips was wise. The sooner the tale were told, the sooner she would forget.

"And when took they the *Walrus?*"

"I cannot tell," she replied, perplexedly. "It seems a long time ago. We sailed among some islands first and more of their men came on board. There were a great many of them. But the *Walrus* was so big—I was sure—*sure*—she would take me away——"

The Captain moistened his lips. He spoke quietly, in a lower pitch than he had used before.

"I knew Anthony Blount. He was master of the *Walrus*," he said.

"They killed him! They killed them all. The Lady was very drunk——" The child's voice failed utterly. There was a little silence, then she began again at some point to which her memory had progressed.

"After that I would not go on the deck where I must see them, though the Captain was more kind —and noticed me more often. Sometimes he would lay his hand upon my shoulder," she shuddered. "I feared him—he was so cruel. Then a sailor named Witherly locked me in my cabin and brought me my food himself. Always when he

came he said 'Thou'rt safe here,' but he was the man who would have killed me and he looked at me strangely. Yet I dreaded him not so much as the other. I felt—truly—safer. I could no longer hear the dreadful talking—their words——. And I wondered if the witch's curse kept away the Lady. I prayed God to bless the witch."

The lad's look, half amazed, half admiring, dwelt upon her earnestly. The Captain shook his head.

"Never speak well of the minions of Satan, child," he said with sternness. "Never speak well of witches."

The girl looked at him soberly. If she pondered his reproof she did not answer, and he rose from his place and cast an eye at the sails, touching her lightly with silent deprecation as she went on.

"After that—after they took the *Walrus* I could not cry, and then I could not sleep. It was all dreams. I could not think or feel at all even when I prayed. I talked a great deal to myself. I thought there were two of myself. And sometimes one was a slave, and one was dead and in Heaven—and the one that was a slave would beg the other to take her away, but she mocked and would not. I thought the witch was there—and I pleaded—on my knees—and the man that sent the pirates sneered. And I saw Uncle and—Aunt—and they wept a great deal and went calling me—everywhere—and when I cried to them the pirates laughed and shouted so they could not hear." Her tones had dropped; the Captain bent far forward to catch the words. "Sometimes I saw them—Uncle Amory and Aunt Charlotte—and they laughed and were

merry—and that was worst of all, till I kept falling —and the rats came. One I loved. He was a little one and would let me feed him crumbs. I used to store them for him. But I feared them at night—and I had no light—I dared not sleep then if I could. So it went—so long—so many nights——"

Roger turned his face away. Something of the softness of youth had gone out of it. Captain Phips again filled the pause. The sound of his voice, homely and friendly, changed her terrified stare to a look less dreadful.

"'Tis July now, Little Maid, the nineteenth day. Canst remember when they stole thee?"

"'Twas the planting time."

"And how came it to thee to drop the rope to Roger?"

Her eyes sought the lad's face and rested there with something of his own intentness.

"'Twas a little rope—tied to a ring in the floor," she said musingly as if seeking some link forgotten. "There were four rings, but only one rope." A light flashed into her face and she spoke more rapidly. "When another ship came—I would have thrown it—though I thought it was but another dream—so they could come and get me—but something happened. The other ship kept moving away—and after that I knew nothing. It was like a sleep—save—once I woke, in a great silence and heard water trickling—I thought they were going to drown me—all alone in the dark——" The Captain drew a breath most like a sob. Roger's hands were clinched deep. His face was haggard like the child's. "I screamed—and then I felt

Mamma's arms around me—and she spoke to me—'My foolish little one, what can frighten thee when I am here,' she said. And when I opened my eyes—here—on this ship—I thought to see her——" The Captain would have spoken but his voice did not come at his bidding. "You never knew her—or my father—in England?" She looked up eagerly at the Captain, who had risen. He moved restlessly and there was a huskiness in his answering question.

"What was thy father's name, Little Maid?"

"Francis—and so is mine—but with an *e*. There was no man left to bear it, so they gave it to a girl. Some day—when I am grown—I shall go back to Danesleigh and see my father's people and be their queen as Mamma was——" She gazed straight before her, neither at Roger nor the Captain, but into some far away future that brought strength and purpose into the delicate face.

"Is it very large, Danesleigh?" The Captain had stopped, absently turning the silver bar in his hand, his eyes not long from the Maid.

"Very—very large. You can drive many hours and never see the highway, but not so grand as Kilby West where we went for the hunting. Sometimes the King came there. But it was too far from London for a home, my father said."

"And hast thou no relatives, none to——"

She shook her head, her eyes filling again.

"Not any one," she answered in a kind of passion of loneliness. "No one but a cousin and him my father hated."

"What is the cousin's name?" The Captain had laid the bar back upon the shelf.

"Gregory Bellingham." A look of repulsion was on her face. "I wish he had not my father's name—and mine."

Roger had flushed darkly, but this time he held himself in check.

"Thou hast seen him often?"

"I have never seen him—not since I was too little to remember. He did not come to Danesleigh."

"And the name of my little maid is Frances—Frances Bellingham?" The Captain spoke the words softly.

She caught her breath; the tone was too kind. Her "yes" came half falteringly. "But Uncle Amory had many names for me, a new one for every day, Aunt Lotta said. Sometimes 't was 'Little Worthless.'" She smiled, tremulously. "Will it—will it be long before I see them?"

She put up her hands to the Captain and he clasped them in his rough palms, drawing her gently to her feet.

"'Twill not seem long," he answered. "And thou wilt trust me to take thee to them? I have no little maid to call me father and so I have much time and strength to give to this one that I found." There was nothing of the gallant Phips that jested, stepping aside for some great lady's train, nothing of the courtier, about his words. He spoke truly, with the tender chivalry of childless men, for whose childlessness the world is gainer, and the girl believed him. But the face of the lad was sober unto grief. Her sufferings were still upon him, and the load was heavy.

"Soon we will gladden the heart of thy Uncle Amory—and thy good Aunt," the Captain went on cheerfully. "And that will be very joyful. Meantime we'll be merry—will we not?"

She nodded, her eyes glowing under their wet lashes, her face transformed with hope.

"And every day we'll thank God that sent us our Little Maid to make the voyage shorter. Wilt be queen of the *Araby Rose* till thou com'st to thy own people? I fear me thou'lt be a very great tyrant!" The Captain shook his head, the moisture in his own eyes softening the mischief of the last words.

She nodded again, almost gaily.

"Thou'lt see," she said.

"One thing we must not do," the Captain added soberly. "We must not tell any other of thy true name. Canst promise that?" He looked from the girl to Roger, who stood near but a little to one side, lest he intrude himself. The lad's expression had broken into warmth and light at the change in hers.

"And one more thing thou must do." The Captain was still serious, his gaze upon the upturned face of the girl. "My Little Maid must hear to-morrow why Roger knew of the *Seaflower*, and she must not let it make her sad."

Her look, grown wistful again, was smiling when he finished.

"So many *musts* for a queen! 'Tis thou art a tyrant!" and as she spoke, laughter, caught still with tears, the pure upwelling laughter of a child, rippled softly from the cabin.

Maccartey pacing with nervous strides the constricted space of the deck above heard it, and muttered with incoherent rapture; and the men, watching as the Captain came forth, looked upon his face and knew that all was well.

## CHAPTER IX

### MUTINY AND AN OMEN

"'TIS lucky for Captain Phips he hath a crew of silly old women!" Gedge dropped his end of the knobbed and curious weight swung aboard from the deep-laden periagua and kicked it shufflingly as he spoke.

The day's dredging was ended. Already the hold of the *Araby Rose* was piled high with treasure, the souls of the men glutted with its daily contemplation.

"A thousand fortunes in the ship—and every piece we sweat for goes to him and them that sent him! Fools we are I say." The grumbler kicked again at the heavy load fallen under their feet.

Fangs interrupted the succeeding oaths.

"Stow yer jaw and do summat w'en the time comes," he muttered.

A dozen sailors were pausing attentively within hearing. He sent them back to their toil with a sharp thrust of his poisonous tongue. Maccartey patrolling the poop deck, where oftenest, in these days, he kept a vigilant watch, had turned toward them.

Suddenly Fangs darted forward and pounced upon a slouching figure creeping nearer to listen. The group re-formed about the prisoner held fast in the clutch of his captor and of the grumbling Gedge.

Jacob Munch was frightened. His petty mind, suspicious, envious, ill-natured as it was, had only so much of craftiness as a loutish blunderer could compass. His tongue was unready.

A look ran from eye to eye about him as a flame leaps from dried leaf to dried leaf when the spark falls. Jacob did not comprehend the look, nor the words he had overheard. Other words penetrated. Against Gedge's persistent warning, Fangs poured them into the captive's ear, rapidly, in his sibilant phrases that struck through the tough integument of a sluggish brain.

The youth's leaden cheeks grew still more unwholesome in colour; his narrow eyes lifted themselves, all at once startled into a direct glance. He cringed abjectly.

"Don't murder me," he begged.

"I told ye the lummux had no blood in him!" Gedge regarded Fangs with a satisfied leer. "Yer fat's in the fire. A reef in yer tongue wouldn't hurt ye. I ain't speakin' fer none but me—but fer me the's better captains than a man thet shouts he's comin' before he gits there—'t's too much like a stinkin' pole-cat!"

Gedge brought out his meaning with vulgar emphasis. The men listened to his drawl with approval.

The little eyes of Fangs glittered and he worked his tongue in and out around the protruding teeth in a tentative fashion. His lips took on a nasty twist and he let his snaky gaze wander about the circle. When he spoke it was to Gedge.

"Mebbe ye think ye're the brains o' this plan!

Can ye navigate a ship? If I choose to wait—then it's wait! If I choose *now* to strike—*now's* the time!" Here he winked and wagged his head confidentially, sure of his power.

The men laughed.

"We ain't ready to-night." Gedge's words seemed to carry conviction to more than one. "The treasure ain't in."

"Shet yer mouth, yer white-livered sneak." Fangs's profanity rolled in a horrible profusion of defilement from his twisted lips. He glared upon the other, his little eyes glazing. "Ye're afraid—afraid—an' puttin' it off to warn the Captain!" He extended his gaze once more to include the circle. "Shall we settle 'im first? 'e's a traitor!"

The violence of the greater villain—or a certain truth in the venom of his words—had won. Gedge surrendered. He fell to work upon the bags and sang with the loudest as the heap grew larger at the foot of the mast.

Maccartey had watched the short conference suspiciously. Through the open skylight he could see Captain Phips and Tom. The carpenter was busy strengthening the lockers of the cabin. The Captain had taken a hand himself, explaining as he worked.

"I've carpentered more years than thou, Tom," Maccartey heard him say.

Beside the mate Roger stood and waited.

"You called me, sir," he reminded him at length.

"So I did—'tis true. I was shpellbound—listenin' to the Captain's voice. I'm bothered in me mind. The men have been conflammin' to-

gether. Hast marked annythin' in the boat, lad?" He looked down at the growing pile the crew were transferring from the periagua.

Munch had been spirited away and left, securely trussed, where he could do no harm.

"'E join?" Manuel had asked, an ugly grin anticipating the answer. Manuel was not a bad example of his fellows, superstitious to all depths of credulous besottedness, gloating upon the sight of suffering with relish that had a keener edge if he could himself inflict the pang.

"'E join us?" he had repeated when Fangs chose not to hear.

"'E would—ter save his skin!" the leader had answered contemptuously. "But 'e aint arsked to join nothin'. We're short o' hands or I'd sent'im to rot w'ere 'e belongs. We'll get a better outern the first ship we over'auls. I couldn't stomach 'im long. A shark couldn't keep *'im* down!"

He illuminated his words by gesture and invective grotesque and abhorrent, delighting his audience whenever he outdid them in coarseness. "If 'e'd yelled out, they'd 'ad us—four of 'em with an arsenal be'ind 'em!" he finished, nodding viciously in the direction of the cabin where the carpenter's hammer still sounded.

Fangs scowled as he fell again to work. The mutiny was not wholly ripe. The victory over the *Walrus* had added strength to the hold Captain Phips had already upon his crew; a third were lukewarm, a few even unwilling, the cook openly protesting. Tom the carpenter was as staunch as Maccartey. No word had been said to Tom. He

was safe, at the moment, where he could not give the alarm, and to delay now was impossible in any case. No pledge of Jacob Munch could be trusted.

Sullen, lustful, determined, the men who had no arms seized surreptitiously upon other weapons, the iron hooks and drags, awkward implements of their treasure fishing. As their hands closed upon these rude bludgeons their eyes swam greedily on the unopened bags, their day's spoil, still dripping upon the windy, sun-scoured deck.

Their movements were rapid and not without skill. As they secured their clubs, acting under the direction of Fangs, they appeared merely to move the pile of iron to make room for the last of the periagua's load.

There was little preparation needed, at most three men and a boy to face. The Captain was still absorbed in his carpentry, the mate's gaze an instant turned to the horizon. But the eyes of the remaining watcher were not shut.

"Mutiny! Capt——"

Roger's voice burst in a clarion shout through the open skylight, a shout cut midway by a blow. Four of the rebels, slipping forward, had leaped swiftly up the poop ladder. The rest were rushing in a ravening horde upon the cabin.

The sea danced cheerfully, tossing whorls of foam from every wave, and the wind ran unwearied in its laughing game after the shining whiteness that came and went upon the upreared crests. The *Rose*, dancing with the sea, tugged merrily at her anchor.

The crew confident, rioting in brutal fancy, certain of their prey, had already the callous grimness, the zestful fury of their quest. There was assurance in the very boisterousness of their advance.

Into this assurance, this daring of a horde against a handful, upon the very bludgeons of the already triumphing mass, a single figure hurled itself. In the very utterance of Roger's cry the Captain was upon them—his huge frame instinct with a vital rage, his whole unconquerable personality thrusting the mob before him.

"Cowards! Dogs!" he panted. "Ye dare!" The butts of his pistols swept them out of his path, and they stumbled over fallen bodies, striving to reach him with their blows. Fangs and Gedge were trampled beneath the foremost. The mass was breaking.

The carpenter leaned through the window, his pistols cocked, raging at the Captain's "Don't shoot, Tom!"—ready to disobey if the tide of conquest turned.

On the poop the man whose blow had cut off Roger's shout was down. Another had taken his place. With him the lad strove fiercely. The mate, braced against the bulwarks, battling with two assailants, still defended himself.

Suddenly one of the two slunk quickly away and sprang down the clear retreat of the ladder. Before any could cry out in warning, the man's weapon was over the Captain's head and Tom, unnoticed by the assassin, was leaning joyously nearer as his ball sped home.

Roger heard the shot but it was some seconds

before he heard more. When he opened his eyes Maccartey was still doggedly holding off two assailants, but his strength was going. The lad clutched swiftly at the man beneath whose fist he had gone down, jerked the legs sharply from under him, and struggling rolled with him to the main deck.

This time, for a goodly space, he neither heard nor saw. A ringing of hard metal fallen upon the planks whereon his head was resting roused his senses to some returning life. A voice came to him vaguely, a powerful voice, interrupted by assenting murmurs.

The voice became clearer, the murmurs more emphatic. He thought himself sleeeping and strove to wake.

"Art alive, lad?"

He opened his eyes drowsily upon the scarred visage of Sparhawk.

"Bill!" he whispered reproachfully.

"Hist there, lad. I knocked ye down easy lest another kill ye."

Roger did not understand. He tried to lift himself but did no more than raise his face from the planks and ease his head against the ship's side. His eyes were still drowsy but he saw the Captain and knew whose voice it was that had mingled with his blurred half consciousness.

The picture came before his mind as one of the shifting scenes of sleep and he waited dully for it to change.

The Captain, mounted upon the treasure, was still speaking. Below him the men stood stupidly, like cattle. The wind came freshly off the sea and

blew strongly in the lad's face. He pulled himself higher and saw the irons dropped upon the deck. It was their clang that first had roused him.

His eyes travelled past the listening crew to the cabin window and Tom the carpenter who waited yet, his pistols ready; then from the window to the poop above. He could not see the mate, and for a minute he watched the bulwarks swim up and down upon the sky. As they sank, the descending sun burned above the black rim and made him blind.

Now single words began to separate themselves from the unmeaning many, and he heard intently, straining his mind to follow. The terrific energy of the voice whose explosions had beaten at first upon the air like cannonading close at hand, had sunk somewhat. But its strokes came unerringly as the ring of a hammer upon steel, and it went forward with forcible distinctness.

"My promise against yours. My bond signed and sealed against your own."

Roger sat up. Remembrance had returned. The crew were cheering, a hoarse roar of admiration and consent. The weapons lay where they had fallen. The faces turned to the Captain wore expressions newly varied, the grudging surrender of the beaten, the shamed loyalty of traitors self-convicted, the enthusiasm of prodigals returned.

Roger took a swift count of the defeated and saw that the conquest was complete. There would be no more mutiny for long time to come upon the *Araby Rose*. In his search his eyes came upon Maccartey, bruised and smeared with his own blood, standing in grim guard over two prisoners. Fangs was one.

"The Little Maid knows naught of this. 'Tis my own fears that make me ask the pledge. She was sent to us——"

"Aye, sir. She brought us the treasure." The voice of the reanimated Gedge broke in upon the Captain's, ardent in approval.

Again Roger was at a loss for the meaning of what he heard, "the Little Maid" and "the pledge."

"The pledges then are these." The lad hearkened eagerly. "I promise that which was ever my intention, a fair fortune for every man, and if the Company make not the promise good I redeem it from my single share. Is it a fair pledge?"

"None could make a fairer." Again the voice of Gedge.

"And now what is't ye pledge in return?"

The Captain stood over them like a schoolmaster lessoning an unruly class.

"'Tis this." An older man took the words from the very teeth of the forth-putting Gedge. "'Tis this, Captain Phips." He plucked at his forelock as he spoke. "We gives our oaths as we 'opes for mercy to serve faithful on the *Rose*, obeyin' orders till she's safe in port, and never to pipe a word to livin' soul, of the Little Maid. And for the man that whispers it, even in 'is cups, to any—the curse of Mad Timothy be on 'im."

The words sounded simple enough, but a shudder went through the men.

"'Tis too awful a curse," muttered Gedge. "'Twould sour a man's stomach for his pewter."

The Captain's eyes blazed on him for an instant, turned suggestively to Maccartey, then swept the group.

"And I—" his words smote roundly on their ears—"am willing to be bound by that which leaves me poor, and cursed by the same curse if I break it! 'Tis my pledge against yours! How shall it be?"

Roger had listened staring, his breath waiting on the answer. But Gedge's had been the solitary protest. The ravening pack was tamed. The lad slipped lower and drowiness crept once more upon him. His lids closed. But the pain in his head was very great. It would not let him sleep.

Sparhawk was no longer near him but after a space there came a touch upon his forehead. The touch was soft yet the vicious throbbing responded to it with livelier throes. He moved involuntarily and winced as the motion stabbed him. For a space again he was alone.

"Here, lad, sit up and take thy medicine like a Christian. 'Tis no time for sleeping. Come!"

A lusty arm was thrust beneath his shoulders. He knew the voice for Maccartey's. It brought warmth with it.

"The Little Maid?" The lad's eyes questioned more than the words.

"The Little Maid, is it, then! Lift thy head and see her! 'Tis she will give us no peace till thou art through thy shamming—as if the cap'n and mate of the *Rose* had no better to do than nurse a stripling with a broken head! Here, take the cordial."

Roger drank in docile haste but his lips screwed themselves awry at the dose he swallowed.

"Arrah! The ungrateful rogue!" Maccartey's tongue ran often in moments of emotion to a soft

brogue repudiated by his Boston training. "'Tis no poison we're giving thee, but good herbs, and costly into the bargain. A fine brew!"

A sleepy laugh woke in the lad's face.

"An' it be as potent as 'tis vile I'm well already," he said—slowly. "Why—I *am* well!"

He released himself from the mate's grasp, and felt the clumsy beating of his heart subside. As he essayed to get upon his feet, he saw the Maid. She stood near, watching with a little anxious frown the effort he was making. Something in his look sent an answering delight into her own. She clapped her hands.

"He will live! He speaks like himself! He will live!" she cried, and Manuel, hearing the sound and the exclamation, crossed himself devoutly, feasting his passing glance on the ugly plaster that striped Maccartey's cheek, and the uglier bruise above the boy's temple.

"Thou'rt not hurt?" Roger's gaze kept to the Maid, seeking some sign of mischief upon her.

"The cook locked me below—in the cabin. I could not get out." She came nearer, appealing to Roger and the mate. "Tell me—was it a mutiny? Will they—be hanged?" New violence coming upon the old had pressed hard upon her. In her agitation trembled a nervous dread, made greater by the horror of remembrance.

Roger spoke quickly.

"The men are forgiven. There'll be no more mutiny."

"But the prisoners?"

"They're too sick to be hanged," Maccartey put

in cheerily. "They'll go easier'n they deserve. Hast nothing to fear. 'Tis all over now."

The Maid drew yet nearer, comforted by the tone.

"Nothing can harm thee while the Captain——" Maccartey would have gone on.

"He is a hero!" she interrupted radiantly. "I love him well."

The lad's eyes flashed, and the mate's beamed satisfaction with her words.

"'Tis so," he said. "We love him well."

"Where is he?" Roger was standing at last. The medicine worked nobly but there was a ringing in his head as of a blacksmith's anvil. Maccartey watched him cautiously as he answered.

"Writing," he replied briefly. "A pledge for the signing of the crew."

"With the oath of Mad Timothy?"

Maccartey looked anxiously around. The Maid had left them.

"Aye," he answered—"that same."

"'Tis short. He must be finished by this," the lad said wearily. "What made my head play me this coward's trick?"

"Trick is it! Boots and body o' me, boy! Faith, and 'tis thy thick skull thou mayest be praising thou'rt not cracked entirely! An eight-foot tumble with Bill atop—and after the pirate's blow——"

"'Tis not the thickness of the skull but the sound brains within——"

Maccartey had not finished. He disregarded the interruption.

"An' it's mebbe cracked thou art! Thou talkest as if writing were but an easy task! See here, lad, canst write, thyself?" He moved confidingly closer for the answer.

"Try me." Roger laughed again. "I believe I can walk. The dizziness is gone."

"Then walk thou to the Captain and lend a hand at the pledge. That's a fine figure of pluck for ye," he added, as the lad moved unsteadily toward the cabin door. "But I'll not be sending him aloft the night!"

The pledge, inscribed upon a dingy leaf torn from the ship's log, was ready.

One by one the men had slouched or shuffled forward. Gedge had read the promises aloud, administered the formidable oath, and witnessed the signing that closed the compact. More than one hand shook as it laboriously traced its mark upon the paper. The manuscript completed looked to Roger not unlike the picture writing of the Northern Indians, the signatures scattered upon the page like signs of the zodiac in a confusion of worlds.

As fast as their symbols were affixed the men returned to their tasks. Gedge had recited the oath of Mad Timothy with special unction to Jacob Munch, and the youth's terror showed in the nerveless bungling of his letters.

The Little Maid remained fast by the side of Captain Phips; as the day drew on toward night she felt never safe elsewhere. To her request to read the pledge he had shaken his head.

"'Tis not good reading," he had answered with

sturdy good humour. "Bother not thy head with script. 'Tis unnatural for maids—and thou'rt too young. 'Tis bad enough for Roger!"

"I can write; my uncle taught me," she had replied shaking her head in turn. "Thou wilt let me help sometimes—like Roger?" she had begged.

"Shalt have thy way if writing must be done. I crave no more of it," and seeing her wistful still, he laughed and the laugh rolled out wholesome and confident across the sparkling waves. "'Tis not every Captain hath two such scriveners in one ship! Why, lass, 'tis a brave academy, the *Araby Rose!*"

The Little Maid had not laughed, but in her soberness was a deep content. Her eyes clung to him as the eyes of hapless things cling to a protector, and she was with him still as he issued from the cabin and took his stand opposite Maccartey, who directed the work upon the treasure.

The bars had all been stowed. The jewels rested in the Captain's lockers. The heap of bags waited. Piled together like shapeless trunks, petrified in the fifty years of their immersion, they lay at the foot of the mast.

Two men with axes were ready beside the first. The hard substance that encrusted the canvas itself embedded strange sea spoils—shells, petrified sprays of plume and weed, and broken branches of the coral, blanched ghostly in the lime.

Gedge struck lustily and the encasing hardness cracked under the blow. Tom waited grimly, spat first on one hand, then the other, and swung the clumsy haft above his head. The thick crust

split from end to end. A stream of glittering silver flowed across the deck, running even to the feet of the Little Maid.

She went quickly forward and bent to touch a sea anemone frozen in the solid rime. The projecting edge broke short and she stood up gazing ruefully upon it. The slight wrench had stirred the mass and set flowing upon the deck fresh streams of shining coin. In the very centre there lay exposed a leather pouch. The case was rotted. Even as it was given into the Captain's hands it fell away from a delicate vase, the cup a pure crystal hollowed within and twined without by clasping tendrils of gold, the whole so tiny a man could grasp it only with a thumb and finger lest he crush it. The Maid cried out softly as it came to light.

Maccartey first broke the silence that followed its appearance.

"Sure 'tis the sea fairies sent it to thee, little one!" he exclaimed.

The men had gathered closer, superstition and greed glowing in their look.

"I fear me, no better fairies than could man a ship!" The Captain turned the glass as he spoke so the light of the sun streamed through it into their faces. "The Maid shall drink to us—safe home and the keeping of the pledge!" he cried.

The sun, sinking steadily to the near horizon burned across the waters in a blaze dazzling and resplendent. Between, the translucent sea shone like the glory of another world. The stained rigging caught the fervid light upon furled sail and battered spar, transfigured to a brilliance not its own.

The group below the mast showed clearly, their features, reddened or bronzed, raw-hued or dull, luminously plain, the Indians alone smooth and unblemished of skin. On swarthy arms wielding the axes great muscles came and went, writhing like serpents beneath their hairy covering.

The rings in Manuel's ears gleamed against his curls, and his red cap made a brighter spot in the brightness, its tassel swinging as he shifted his bare feet upon the planks. Homespun or fringed cloth, flaunting sashes or leathern belts, backs clothed or naked, the glamour found them out and clothed them all.

Save for the strokes upon the crusted bags and the rattle of coins into an empty chest, the group were silent till the cup was filled. The Maid had returned to the Captain and stood beside him waiting. Maccartey's eyes strayed from the Spanish silver spilled upon the boards and rested on her face.

The sea had mounted upon the round disc of the sun. The light had changed. A crimson splendour splashed the waves and poured its flood upon the ship. The glinting silver gave it back in fiery coruscations, and the cup, aflame in all its transparent crystal, seemed the colour's soul and source.

The axes had fallen, idle; the streams of silver spread, unregarded, upon the rolling deck. The sailor kneeling by the chest forgot his task, staring upward at the child. Roger had drawn nearer to Captain Phips.

The Little Maid took the crystal from the Captain's hand. The hush grew deeper, the watching

more strained. Her look, bent upon the men about the mast, upon Roger, and last upon the Captain, was grave and searching.

Steadily she raised the cup, and drank. And as she turned again to her protector, there came upon her lifted face a smile wondrous as the sea, sudden and magical as the radiant afterglow.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ROYAL GOVERNOR

THE crowd pouring from Meeting House square into King street from either side the Town House blocked the way to suffocation.

Farther up Cornhill Mr. Clark, the pewterer, was bowing forth a dame who had bargained long and bought nothing. Dragging at her hand, a small boy, in flowing trousers that just showed the butternut-colored hosiery between them and his shoes, looked anxiously in the direction of the throng.

"And the shallow bowl——" began the dame again.

"Will be no less and no more this twelvemonth," interrupted the merchant, hastily beginning to fasten on the wooden shutters of his shop. "I shall be pleased to have you see them at leisure in a better light, Mistress Munch," he added as the woman moved away abruptly.

She vouchsafed no reply, being angry at his haste, and turned her back without farewell. The anxious look upon the small boy's face lightened as they mixed in the thickening concourse, and he pulled with increasing energy at his mother's arm.

Mistress Munch was stout and dangerously laced, nor was more speed attainable save at the expense of dignity already wounded by the pew-

terer's independence. She cuffed the small boy smartly, exasperation tingling in the blow.

"For shame, Shubael," she scolded. "Acting and pulling like one possessed! Come here, sir!"

Shubael whimpered softly to himself and fell back unprotesting, the eagerness gone from his chubby face. The woman still scolded as they went, interrupting herself often to greet a neighbour with the shade of cordiality or distance that should indicate his rank.

They had followed without difficulty through the square and along the south wall of the Town House, but at the head of King Street the obstructing currents flowing from Pudding Lane on the right and from Crooked Lane and Shrimpton's on the left checked their advance, and they were caught in a backward wash of the tide and stranded in a spot where motion ceased.

Mistress Munch dropped the child's hand to guard the amplitude of her skirts, and the boy whimpered again, frightened by the numbers pressing upon them.

Talk hummed in the quiet air, bits of exclamation, homely chat and comment, zigzagging among friends.

"There be eight companies to meet him."

"Is it sure they pass this way?"

"Of couse, zany? Why else went the militia—"

"I feared 'twas Scarlett's—Sir Humphrey Wildglass landed at Scarlett's."

"And the people thick as porridge here in King Street; where be thy eyes?"

"Calm thyself, Charity," put in a louder voice.

Shubael edged away from the speaker, who towered appallingly above him. "'Tis no good preparation for the morrow. 'Twere better had the ships arrived before, not set thy tongue wagging on worldly discourse upon the Sabbath eve."

"Sir William should better control the winds! 'Twas blameworthy—and somewhat rank in taste—to be in such haste for Boston! 'Tis to be wondered if your governor be counted of the elect."

The Puritan wheeled to see who had addressed him, strong curiosity in his expression as he perceived the stranger.

"I fear your words have too much truth in them, Sir," he replied gravely. "But it is not in the power of William Phips to control the wind that 'bloweth where it listeth'. I but meant to urge he might have waited without until the——"

The sentence was lost in a forward movement of the mass that hemmed them in. A roll of drums from the distance had quickened the steps of the foremost. The way opened again, the main stream carrying with it the lesser tributaries.

The stranger had taken out his snuff box, a perfume shaking from the lace of his sleeves as he tapped the inlaid lid suggestively. "An indulgence I may not offer on the Sabbath eve?" he asked with suave insolence as they separated.

"'Tis Sir Humphrey Wildglass, Charity," whispered the friend. "He came on the same ship with Mr. Apthorpe."

"His apparel suits not the good sense of his words." The Puritan's tone, that he made no effort to modulate, was again loud with disfavour.

Mistress Munch had but waited to catch the stranger's name.

"I see Madam Verring, Mam."

Shubael spoke for the first time, a shy purpose in his words.

"Where?" His mother drew him hastily after as she crossed to the entrance of Pudding lane. "Make your manners to Madam," she admonished him as they went.

The air was charged with invisible excitement, but the crowd was grave rather than cheerful, and gave serious attention to its steps, conversing staidly as it progressed and giving vent to no shoutings nor vain noises.

To hasten in such a concourse was to be unpleasantly conspicuous, and it cost Mistress Munch some moments of careful manœuvring to overtake the two upon whom her eyes were set, the more because wherever the couple moved the multitude opened to let them pass, returning their salutations with deep respect and closing in promptly behind them.

Nothing in the fashion of their dress distinguished them from their neighbors. The woman's bonnet and mantle were far plainer than those of Mistress Munch, though their texture, like that of the sad-colored silk, was of greater richness. She drew closer to her husband as the crowd jostled her.

"Would it be better we returned," he asked, pausing. "The numbers are oppressive——and this welcoming of a royal governor is little to my mind."

"Nay, Nicolas," his wife replied quickly. "I

would stay and see. He was ever kind to Roger." She added the last sentence in a lower tone, knowing, as her husband knew, that it was the sight of Roger at the head of his company she most craved.

"He is not unlike thee, in his uniform," she continued after a little silence, pursuing their unuttered thought.

Nicolas Verring's look had gathered sternness in the waiting. He harked back to her words about the Governor.

"It remaineth to be proved whether or no we repent that kindness. Thou judgest weakly, Alison."

The woman flushed a little at the heat of his tone.

"It is natural a mother should be mindful of those that deal graciously by her children," she rejoined quietly. She had not forgotten the *Hopewell*, though she forbore to recall it aloud. Even after six years her heart warmed to the man who had protected her boy, but her husband's reproaches left a trouble in the memory, and she harrowed her secret thoughts for a lurking wickedness that might prefer her son's welfare to his soul's salvation.

"Would he resembled me in the spirit rather than in the perishable flesh," the father persisted strenuously. "There would be no more paltering. I would have Roger owe nothing to the faction of Sir William Phips—'tis a leading of the blind. Serving God with levity of carriage! And the boy hath vain desires—— There's little of the light in him. God forbid that little should be made a darkness!" A worried look drew together his

brows and he stopped abruptly. "Captain Fitch is beckoning us," he added as he raised his eyes. "Shall we go over?"

"Let us wait here," his wife urged quickly. "I refused Madam Butler's invitation to share her porch. I thought 'twould seem too much like merrymaking for the eve of the Sabbath day."

"Now who'd have thought to meet a friend in such a rabble!" The surprise of Mistress Munch was somewhat overdone. "Have you seen aught of Christopher? He was to wait me on the corner by Madam Phillips's, but 'tis no wonder to miss each other in a press like this! Saw you ever the like! And who may be the—— 'Tis my Jacob and his sister! See, in the window yonder!" She gave her whole attention for a breathing space to the opposite side of the way.

Mr. Verring had inclined his head at her approach but paid her no further heed; and Madam Verring had smiled, but the smile had been chiefly for Shubael, who crept to her side, in his mother's brief preoccupation, and gazed up at her as a dog gazes when it feels importunately the need of speech.

"What is it, Shubael?" she asked, comprehending.

"Will there be volleys for the Governor?" The question came in an explosive whisper.

"It is the Sabbath eve," Nicolas Verring answered severely. "There will be no firing."

The boy shrank abashed, and dropped his eyes. Alison Verring bent to settle the cap on the close-cropped head.

"The volleys will be on Monday," she said gently.

A gleam illuminated the round face but the child ventured on no further speaking.

"Christopher will have it Jacob's new doublet is far too fine for the provinces, but it sets him off mightily!" Mistress Munch had drawn a dozen short breaths and was in full voice again. "His figure is much improved, I tell him. 'Tis more elegantly proper. There's not a better turned leg in Boston. I can't abide the spindling youths that dangle after Beulah."

Nicolas Verring was about to carry off his wife to the neglected hospitality of Captain Fitch, a righteous distaste for the vulgarity of the woman operating with a stronger disapproval of the matter of her discourse, but his intention was frustrated by Christopher Munch himself.

Alison Verring moved a little apart as the man appeared. Mistress Munch grew silent; the inflation of her mood collapsed sharply. In her manner was unpleasantly manifest the cowardice of a small nature browbeaten and bullied. Something afraid and furtive in her look sent Madam Verring's glance to the window where Jacob Munch was fretfully haranguing his sister. An interruption, apparently an arrival, restored his heavily satisfied expression and he rose with unwonted briskness of motion.

"A wonderful man truly! Heaven send us——"

The owner of the voice had passed on but his enthusiasm lingered in murmurs that echoed his words. An angry light enlivened the dull features of Christopher Munch.

"A melancholy thing," he said sourly, "that the sons of Belial be set on high and time-servers worshipping before them!"

"I cannot call Sir William Phips a 'son of Belial,'" Verring answered calmly. "And it would seem, his faction serve more from misguided zeal than for any ends of self-seeking."

The cold moderation and careful justice of the defence increased the other's truculence.

"Would they might be wiped from the colony and the land purged of their offence!" he rejoined harshly. "Then might we see again the days of godliness! Now when any rapscallion may call himself citizen, member of the meeting or no, even a perverted scoffer may cast a vote. There's no safety in Zion!"

The carnal spite in Munch's tone contrasted as oddly with his words as the coarseness of his overfed person with the would-be sancity of his air. The same confusion appeared in his clothing, that was an unhappy blending of New England sobriety and newly imported worldliness. An aggressive prosperity and an aggressive piousness expressed him equally.

"The godliness of Christopher Munch is like salve on water; it gets never deeper than the surface," Roger had once opined, in the face of some condemnation flagrantly unfair that his father had quoted to him for edification; and Nicolas Verring had reprimanded his son bitterly, seeing in the hasty speech but wilful impiety.

Yet if the face of Nicolas Verring was forbidding, it was with the sternness of the ascetic and its

strength attracted even while its austerity repelled. Nor was the effect marred by physical weakness. His body was of great vigour, the spare frame erect with the militant force of anchorites who survive the rigours of their discipline. His very dress, its sombreness relieved only by the broad collar of fine linen, had a distinction in the wearing. Beside him Christopher Munch showed crassly underbred.

"'Sir William'—'Sir William'! There's nothing else thought on but 'Sir William'! I am sure one wearies of the name!" put in Mistress Munch, faithfully echoing her master.

"And 'tis but a sorry name—repeated so!" The suavely insolent voice again of Sir Humphrey Wildglass. "How much better would sound Sir Christopher—or Sir Jacob!" He had taken his station so that none of the woman's words had missed him. She regarded the interruption with a doubtful flutter, silenced by the derisive amusement in the stranger's look.

Christopher had not heard the low-voiced comment.

"'Tis no great thing to be 'Sir' anybody!" he declared contemptuously, disregarding his wife's effort to call his attention to the newcomer. "It means naught. Titles are but vanities and a snare to the scornful."

Nicolas Verring had been a moment engagad with a passer by, but he caught the last sentence and instantly approved it.

"A man may not deny his blood, but he should depend upon himself and boast not of the grace given unto his ancestors," he said promptly.

"It is of Sir William we are speaking, and he *hath* depended on himself and on none other, Nicolas, and what honours he hath be fairly earned." Madam Verring flushed again as she spoke, but her words held their eloquence conviction to the end. Though dutifully of her husband's public creed and gravely distrustful of the discretion of the Governor, she must yet see rendered to the absent his due.

"Surely, madam, you hold not that adventures on the high seas, and wars, and such-like wildness and rovings, are fit training for a governor of this great colony! What does William Phips know of statecraft?" contended Mistress Munch.

"I know not enough of statecraft myself to judge," answered Alison quietly, "but he hath governed crews and armies well." The instinct to defend the attacked seemed to grow as she talked. "He proved himself not unskilful at the court, and may show greater wisdom than we deem likely. 'Twas for high qualities he was knighted, courage and honesty——"

"And what was he at the start? A mere ignorant sheep herd of Pemaquid. When first he came hither they say he could neither read nor write. Lady Phips, I make no doubt, is preening her feathers for all this new honour. She was not so lacking as some would have it when she married the ship carpenter. It taketh a widow——"

Madam Verring was uncomfortably conscious of Shubael's eyes, grown round with wonder.

"Lady Phips hath her husband in great tenderness. The day must indeed bring her joy," she

broke in with gentle decisiveness, ignoring the other's rancour.

Mistress Munch herself could not write, and her own birth was several shades below the traditions of the "Massachuset colony"; to have been the wife of the Governor and a knight's lady, her glory seen and her importance felt in the very neighbourhood where she had borne the stings of patronage, would have been ultimate happiness to the wife of Christopher Munch.

"I crave pardon, goodwife—canst tell me the name of the maiden, the goddess, who sits so modestly ensconced behind yonder lattice?"

It was once more Sir Humphrey, bowing with supercilious lightness before her whose accent had earlier attracted him.

"'Tis my daughter, Sir — Mistress Beulah Munch," she answered, following his glance.

"Nay, nay, good woman—not the flaxen shepherdess, nor the Corydon in small clothes, but the goddess—she of the dark hair!"

There was agitation in the demand. He bit his lip as he waited, his eyes not leaving the group across the way.

The house at which he stared was close to the street and the ground floor showed no signs of life save the head of an old lady that was often lifted and bowed behind the small panes as if its owner were talking with much animation. Now and again a younger woman had appeared on the threshold, asked a question of those who stood or sat upon the broad step, and retired into the dim interior. The window in the story above, on which

the stranger's eyes were fixed, was wide open, was in fact a door more than a window, whose leaves swung outward upon a narrow cornice above the entrance, exposing a latticed guard set to warn children and the unwary.

Upon this guard two girls leaned and chatted, or rather Beulah Munch chatted while the other listened. The face of the listener was not fully visible, but that she was a stranger like himself and no Puritan must have been clear to a duller sense than Sir Humphrey's.

Mistress Munch had shrugged her shoulders in a sudden pique.

"'Tis like you're making sport of the girl, but Madam Fitch would have my Beulah to meet her. She is but late from England——"

"Her name." The demand came now more peremptorily as if the man felt sharply some pressure the answer might relieve. In his eyes a hard gleam lightened.

"Mistress Armitage—and she hath a given name, terrible odd and outlandish. 'Tis for that I recall it. Temple Armitage is she called. See how she pretends to turn away and not to heed Jacob's speeches! Sly and bold I make no doubt, like many who come hither to flout their betters——"

The acrimonious utterance stopped in mid air for lack of audience. Madam Verring had immediately moved aside at Sir Humphrey's intrusion, and he was no longer heeding.

The girl had changed her position to escape Jacob Munch and was looking forth. Annoyance

had given vividness to her colour and the glow of her beauty warmed the sober street.

It had instant and extraordinary effect upon Sir Humphrey. He stepped hastily backward, paling so that the artificial colour upon his lifeless cheeks was frankly visible.

"Frances!" His lips formed the words, though he had uttered no sound.

"What was that you said, sir?" asked the woman curiously.

"'A goddess', Madam, a very goddess!" He smiled a little stiffly as if the muscles were not wholly relaxed from their amazement, but his tone was as ductile as before. "The sight overcame me. Such is the danger of an abode remote from loveliness!" He answered rapidly, so that his unflattering sentiment was somewhat wasted; and bowing with the same ironical grace with which he had presented himself, he drew back into the throng.

"The nincompoop is smitten with the girl! He needn't think to deceive me!" she sniffed disgustedly as he departed. "Goodwife' forsooth! And 'good woman'! Had I noticed it earlier he'd got no names from Arabella Munch."

From Pierce's alley the last company of militia debouched upon King street and marched rapidly down the hill, the crowd scattering to let them pass—a goodly array, strong-bodied, straight-limbed, with an obstinate independence in their motions, a thoughtful energy in their cleanly pronounced features.

In Captain Fitch's pasture there was a sudden

commotion as the constable dislodged the boys who had climbed indecorously into the trees that fringed the highway; the officer stalked back, solemnly triumphant, his crestfallen prey at his heels, the whole party daintily bespattered with pink petals and white.

The mass of people grew denser, more impatient in the subdued by-play of talk and rare gesture, more often stopping to frown expectantly toward the shore.

Nicolas Verring sent no interested glance in the direction of the wharf. He gave his attention wholly to the conversation his companion had not allowed the gossip of the women to interrupt.

"They have destroyed us," Munch was saying with violence. "Jacob could tell you—— 'Tis certain that Sir William hath been greatly overrated. A man most unsound and lax. It was an irreligious and godless ship he had in the *Araby Rose*, and shocking to a Godfearing lad like Jacob. I would your Roger had so well escaped the lawless contamination. What blessing can rest on wealth so ill obtained! And the man hath destroyed us," he repeated, "he and Mr. Mather. Traitors to the colony!"

"I would not say traitors, wilful traitors, but destroyers natheless—unwittingly it may be." The lines deepened in Verring's face.

"I'd not thought to hear an injustice from the lips of Nicolas Verring." The man who had joined himself to them was of Nicolas Verring's own type. His voice had the same evenness of pitch; his sentences came with the same weight and au-

thority. "Who hath worked for this colony year in and year out, putting its welfare above all earthly considerations? At peril of his life in a hundred encounters—ever the first to volunteer, ever the first to urge an expedition! At the court of James who refused the preferment the Admiralty would have bestowed, choosing to serve New England rather than himself?"

"'Tis his character, not his good will," began Munch.

"And who assails his character? Some sneaking thief of reputations whom his honesty hath offended! How many men, think you, friend Munch, would lose the whole profit of a toilsome venture to load his ship with a village of frightened settlers fleeing an attack? And how many men would see a fortune of millions spread before them and not be one whit tempted? But what did Sir William? Account for every farthing, and deal so honourably by those above and those below him that 'twas a year's wonder in the greatest capital of Europe! He hath character and to spare——"

"You mistake, Joshua," put in Mr. Verring. "'Tis the strength and wisdom needed to defend our liberties wherein the Governor is lacking."

"Rather 'tis you who mistake!" The judicial pleading was quickened to a livelier indignation. "Our liberties were never in stauncher hands. He and Increase Mather to destroy our liberties! 'Tis to them we owe what we have!"

Verring closed his lips in hard dissent.

"The Charter——" began Munch once more.

"'Twas destroyed long before William Phips was

knighted. And what asked he when King James would have him name a boon for his great and perilous adventure of the treasure—for what did he plead? For the restoration of the charter. And when it was refused, still he importuned, risking his own preferment and wearying the King. And when he had ta'en Port Royal and braved Quebec and came back defeated for lack of those allies that failed by land, what did he then? Sit down by his comfortable hearth and eat and drink and take his ease?" The speaker's eyes rested on Mr. Munch. "Not Sir William! He went again to importune for the conquest of Canada, to urge once more the cause of the Charter. 'Twas dead and mouldered in its grave, but he would have it—and when the new King would not heed, who besought the Queen until she urged his petition upon her absent spouse? Mather and Phips destroyers of the Charter! They risked their heads for its resurrection."

"Then they should have refused the new." Nicolas Verring's face set in yet harder lines.

"Refused and been enslaved! What gain were there in that! 'Twas that or nothing—and 'tis to them, I say, we owe the freedom that it gives. What other colony nameth her own lawmakers? And since we must have a Governor of the royal choosing, is't nothing that he be of our own people —and not an Andros?"

"Aye. But other governors will follow——"

Christopher Munch interrupted in his turn. "And just at this present, bethink you, Joshua Travies, when New England is set upon and buffeted by Satan with witches and devils——"

His words grew louder but became indistinguishable in the brief tumult that rose in the street. The watch were clearing the road for the Governor's escort, pushing the multitude back from the rough flagging that marked the middle of the way to the unpaved walks on either side.

The crowd buzzed and swarmed. In the confusion a barefooted lad mounted upon Madam Shrimpton's gate post and none reproved him. The gaze of Shubael discovered him with envy. The youngest Munch had listened eagerly to the praises of Sir William, his round face peering intently from the folds of his mother's gown.

The sound of drums grew nearer. Alison Verring looked at her husband.

"Roger's company——" she began.

"It will follow the Governor," he answered, his tone calmly indifferent; but his eyes sought and found the young captain while hers still searched.

"None of the officers is so handsome as the commander of the third company. 'Twill follow the Governor," whispered Beulah Munch excitedly, but the other girl did not hear. Since the first her gaze had turned persistently toward the dock, where the *Nonesuch* frigate etched her delicate spars in the soft sky. Even the distasteful attentions of Jacob Munch had been unable to keep from her face a brightness as of happy anticipation.

Beyond the second company was a space, and a continuous murmur ran wave-like before the imposing figure that was left thus conspicuous. It was plain that the party of the opposition was in the minority. The welcome filled the air with

warmth, and the enforced quiet gave to the sudden bursts of sound the intensity of feeling difficultly repressed.

In the open space there rode also the Agent of the Colony, Mr. Mather, and the Lieutenant Governor, colder and harder for the presence of his chief. The eyes of the girl with Beulah Munch gave no heed to either, no heed to any save the Governor himself. Never was maid or man more unconscious of all things near. Captain Phips, or Sir William, or the Governor, it was one to her. The same kindly face, the same powerful body, the same honest and dauntless soul, were there. When the splendid horse and his splendid rider were coming, coming fairly beneath the window, she leaned yet farther, smiling, a strange smile full of a wonder all its own.

Jacob Munch saw the smile and was puzzled, straining his memory to some task; and, anxious to force himself upon her, spoke somewhat loudly at her side. His voice had a peculiar quality of unsound mellowness, an overripeness that to her was nauseous.

The Governor looked up, and looking, gazed suddenly full into the face of the girl. Swift change came in his expression. And as she saw his gaze had found her, she tore the flower from her gown and tossed it, smiling still, as a child might for delight; and the big Governor, bending forward, with his arm outstretched, grasped it skilfully, and taking it in his bridle hand, raised his plumed hat, that he held an instant in graceful homage before he set it back upon his head. Then the maid, watching him,

absorbed, was all at once aware of curious eyes that focussed on herself, the eyes of the whole multitude it seemed, and blushing she drew back quickly out of sight.

Madam Verring alone, of all the throng, had not seen the girl. Her eyes had found her son. In any crowd, in any place, they two most understood each other, and for his look of recognition as he marched past, the mother's heart had waited; yet when he was there before her, his face had lighted not for her but for some other, lighted strangely, exultantly, and thrilled with some new excitement, had passed and never turned her way.

Grim disapproval sat upon her husband's features.

"What was it?" she asked.

"Poor trifling for a governor," he answered. "Sir William hath begun ill. He will find statecraft is more than catching nosegays."

Lieutenant-Governor Stoughton was plainly of the same mind. Pursing his prim mouth to an expression of hard and ladylike disgust, he rode even more sullenly than before.

One other besides Madam Verring had been waiting for Roger, inviting his look. An angry pain had seized her as she saw the gaze he gave to her companion, and Beulah, too, went home but sadly.

In the growing twilight the column took on the majesty of a moving army. Before the entrance to the Town House the marching ranks drew up in solid lines facing the horsemen as they passed through. Behind came the other companies, their

blue and buff no longer distinguishable save as dark and light, and after them, lumbering and straining upon the hill, the mounted guns.

Down below the wharves the sea beat triumphantly upon the land, whelming the marshes with its irrefutable claim. Candles were being lighted in the houses; the chirp of crickets mixed shrilly with the deeper sound of orders given and repeated. Night was flowing in upon the wide peninsula, and beneath its surface calm, as beneath the smooth flood upon the marsh, life stirred and struggled, contending in the gloom with viewless cruelties of pain and fear, or rising in the dim security to unnamed ecstasies of freedom and desire.

Roger hearing, heard nothing, and seeing, was as the blind; he gave his commands monotonously, a force acting apart from his real consciousness someway conducting the business of the hour, nor did he know that the day had gone.

## CHAPTER XI

### A CRY IN THE DARK

THE stay at the Town House was brief, the march to the Governor's residence not long, but the need for escape grew in Roger faster than the movement of events.

Before the escort was re-formed to accompany Mr. Mather, he had slipped away into the dusk, paying small heed to the direction of his going and only anxious to avoid the crowd still pressing upon the heels of the militia. His way homeward was blocked by the throng; Green lane and every alley teemed with the interested multitude, quiet as became the beginning of the Sabbath, yet alert for meetings and bits of timely gossip. Leaving the road he plunged into the darkness beneath the trees and crossed the orchard hastily toward the point of silence.

As he came forth once more into the street, a party of young people, hastening to meet again the dusk-hid ranks, were almost upon him in the dim obscurity. Their voices, carefully lowered, were livelier for the excitement of an unwonted freedom. Roger avoided them instinctively, moving straight forward across the highway and, so, on into the narrow confines of Salutation alley. Laughter came to his ears from behind the closed shutters of the tavern. The sign of the Salutation

creaked in the sea breeze, its painted travellers extending stiff arms of greeting above his head.

He paused as he drew near the water, and set himself upon the right path once more, but the spring night had fast hold of him, the spirit prevailed above the flesh, and by the time he emerged from White-bread alley he was no longer conscious whither his swift steps bore him.

Darkness covered the familiar scene and his soul forgot it. The thought that had been forced back, covered from sight, denied, in the long minutes of the march, now wreaked its will. It drove him striding mightily as toward an unknown goal, whithersoever the way promised solitude; it rose as an underground sea might rise in some amazing convulsion of the deeps and drowned his world in the glorious agitation of its outpoured waters.

Once he stopped, lifting his face to the sky, his head bared to the wind, and sighed—a breath deep, sharply taken, given forth like the whispered echo of a sob, the voice alike of pain or blesséd transport. Solitude he craved, he must have. Fleeing men, rapt away from the sight or thought of them, he had turned again toward the deserted water side.

The shadows lay dark in Moon street. Hardly a candle flicker in its whole length—and silence, filled with cricket calls. Here he slackened his racing steps, lingered in the sheltering dark and dreamed, seeing little even in the dream for the strength of exalted feeling that held him.

A shriek, agonized, commanding, woke him harshly. A woman's scream and vile laughter

that followed. Feeling passed all at once into speed, into the strength of avenging youth.

The shriek was close at hand. Instantly he knew where he stood. A dwindling triangle of grass and weeds separated him from Fish street and the wharves. Across it he leaped while the echo of the cry died among the warehouses.

His coming was furious, irresistible. The men had no sooner heard footsteps on the cobbles than they felt the hammering of his blows. Grown used to the night, he could distinguish the three figures of the dissolving group. One slunk rapidly away into the entrance of Sun court, hiding in the blackness, but the bully who had laughed, roused into a drunken fury, was a heavy brute, and struck out savagely for answer. The woman had drawn back and made no sound as the brief combat progressed.

Roger had not spoken. The other swore and his oaths were unclean, but his weight and the power of his rage counted for little against the righteous frenzy of his assailant, whom the assurance of a finer passion still uplifted beyond the human, so that he vanquished his foe swiftly, closing the foul mouth and dropping the unwieldy bulk with a precision whose impulse was born of life intensified.

But the first figure had crept from its hiding, returned by some second thought to the fray it had avoided. Roger threw out his left arm quickly, warding a stroke before it was fairly aimed, and wrenched a sword from the man's hand. The weapon rattled on the stones and the man sprang at him in a rage more sure, less drunken, than the

fuddled anger of his companion. The grasp was murderous; it had a staying power desperate and vindictive. Even as he fought, Roger wondered at its tenacity that seemed more than retaliation for an interrupted frolic. Strong loathing rose in him at the contact and with the force of a terrific revulsion he freed himself and hurled from him his antagonist. The man had clapped his hand quickly to his side and his pistol discharged itself as he fell.

Down the road the windows of the Ship Tavern glimmered upon the opaque dark; from the other side sounded the clatter of feet beating steadily toward them in the wake of a fleering lantern.

"The watch!" The exclamation broke from him quickly. "We must make haste. This way. Come!"

It was thick shade even here in the open. The clouds were blown across the early stars. Yet something made him sure that the woman was young and a stranger. The lithe movements, the uncertainty about the way, the hesitation as if she expected to mount upon a footpath by the margin of the street when very Boston maid knew that footpaths there were none, all these were confirmation. And with the word *stranger* another conviction, unwarranted, unreasonable, clutched him. It was the Little Maid.

That miracles should be abroad in this hour—miracles for him—seemed to Roger both sane and congruous. Toward this the night had drawn him from the Governor's door. From London to the islands of the sea to find and rescue the Little Maid

—that surely had been even more a miracle! His thoughts were full of a light, a brightness, the shadows could not quench.

They had turned into Wood lane and the watch tramped soberly past, unaware of their flitting, to stop aghast over the reviving form of the prostrate bully. The man of the sword was no longer to be seen, nor did his weapon remain to tell of his presence. There was blood upon the stones, but, save for his bruises, no sign of injury about the burly sailor who sprawled beside the stains.

Roger was silent. In the world to which he had again been caught up speech jarred upon the actuality of things. As soon as the way permitted the girl addressed him. Her voice was constrained and her fright still showed in the attempt to suppress all hint of tears.

"I thank you, Sir," she said. The tone was more eloquent than the formal distance of the words. "I had lost my way. I am but newly come to Boston."

The voice told him nothing. He had been already sure. But it gave him remembrance keen and electric. His dreams had been in the present. Now he was again on the *Araby Rose* and the Little Maid was telling her story. In the greater depth and beauty of her tones there lived still the same quality, and the fear, the struggle for control, had made them once more like the child's.

"Are you hurt—did they——". He spoke with effort.

"Nay," she interrupted. "I cried out the moment they appeared. They but grasped my arms."

She shrank, shivering as if sickened by the thought of the touch. "One would have thrown his cloak over my head."

Roger suited their hurrying pace to a slower climbing of the rough hill and drew her arm farther within his own. A gentle homage was in the involuntary act.

"'Tis unsafe even on the Sabbath. Rascals lie often hid among the docks." He spoke at random, almost unwitting what he said. In this new enchantment of a universe re-created he paid no heed to his own voice but listened greedily for hers. In his preoccupation his tones lost the buoyancy of their natural inflections. They were grave, half-monotonous, as are the voices of those who speak entranced. In their reserve the girl seemed to feel a tacit reproach.

"I left my friends before the procession was at the Town House. The crowd was dense. I tried to make my way around it. But the night came on faster than I had thought,—and then there seemed none to ask." Her utterance was as grave as his own, and far colder.

"So long—all this time you have wandered!" The sympathy, almost the grief, of the change brought back her gratitude in a warm current.

"None had frightened me till—till I called. I do not know well how I may thank you——" Her voice halted rather than ceased. The silence that fell upon their speech was as the silence of the spring night finely astir about them.

The May was at its loveliest, the night its supremest hour, with no discords to hinder the ful-

ness of its harmony, no unregarding eye to affront with blindness its diviner charm. Odours subtle, poignant with a sweetness that came upon the senses delicately and lost itself and returned, magical, to meet the longing it had created; pale glimmerings from the close-crowding depths of new-grown orchards and the thrill of breezes shaken through the marvel of late apple blooms and pale syringa buds; above, the dark cloud mysteries brooding nearer than the skies, and blotting out the far shine of trembling stars; and everywhere—sweeter, more poignant, more magical still—dreamful, evanescent, the fragrance of the blossoming grapes. The dark shut them in. Within its void they were lost, undiscoverable, alone.

To Roger it was all but the outward expression of her, wonderful, mysterious, even in shadow, to one who was content to wait the dawn. For this the barren years had saved him. For this his days had kept aloof from the crude dalliance of his fellows, the early mating, practical and uninspired, of the wilderness. For this he had not heeded that they called him cold, believed him strangely lacking, and mocked him with good-natured raillery, that even the church had accused him, and his father commanded and rebuked, holding his example sinful and pernicious. This then, was the reason, as if unknowing, he yet had known, beneath the lad's indifference, what quest was waiting for the man.

"How beautiful it is—the night!" the girl said softly, her low tones attuned to the whispering quiet of the winds. "It is long since I have seen it

so. At home——" She stopped abruptly, uneasily. "How know you whither I would be going?" she asked.

"So far we cannot be greatly wrong," he answered, suddenly conscious of the remissness of his thoughts, for already they were within the shadow of the Baptist church, and it had not come to him to ask her way until the instant before she spoke. "Is the street known to you?" he added.

The girl had paused.

"I am not sure. But from Judge Sewall's or from Captain Alden's I can find it."

"It had been somewhat shorter had we taken the way below, but it is not far." Roger waited, longing for the courage to turn resolutely back, anxious lest she should propose it. "It is not far," he repeated, "but you are already tired——"

"Not tired, save from fright. Quickly," she urged. "I must not be later." She pressed onward rapidly, hastening his steps. The influence of the night was gone. The daylight world was in her tone, and the trouble of her position, alone and with one unknown in the dark of the streets. "I grieve, Sir, that I should keep you so long from your own affairs," she apologized with chill perfunctoriness.

Roger answered with quick deprecation, feeling the enchantment dulled. From behind the shuttered windows of the nearest house came the sound of psalms mournfully intoned. It was the time of evening prayers, and Nicolas Verring would be waiting in rigid repression, angered and suspicious, for his son. And his son had begun the sacred day

with a street brawl and forgetfulness of all things.

Stern, ascetical, seers of heavenly visions and believers in evil spirits, the men and women in the circle of his Puritan home counted all joy of flesh or spirit that was not an ecstasy of religious contemplation a personal appeal of the Devil's subtlety. The night that had been to Roger the very incarnation of delight was poisoned, its aspiration broken by the habitual sense of guilt.

Of this the girl knew nothing. The canons of her world were conventional, not religious. The gentleness, the distance, of a stranger who had none of the shallow tricks of speech that marked the cavaliers whom she had known, moved her to a growing confidence. As they went on she spoke now and again, naturally, frankly, of her stupidity in missing the way, of the pitfalls in the uncouth cobbles, and of the crooked lanes of Boston, already "a little London in the West," and that he must not blame her friends, for that she had run away and perhaps her fright was meted punishment. Upon which the heaviness departed from him and was no more remembered until he left her.

"Why did you run away?" he asked boldly. He could feel her hesitation, but her words did not betray it.

"There was one in the party I would avoid," she answered.

"Ah, then you like him not!" He sighed with sharp relief, scarce realizing what he said, but recalling his pang at the sight of Jacob Munch bending familiarly near her in the open window.

The girl's amazement brought her to a stand. She withdrew her hand from his arm as if the better to defend her silken skirts from the ill-kept paving, and she did not replace it as they moved on.

"I saw him with you in the window," he said quietly.

The girl made no reply, either too resentful or too much puzzled for answer, and he spoke again after a pause. He was conscious that he had doubly erred, and had associated himself in her mind with the staring crowd from which she had been so eager to escape.

"You must not judge too harshly of us in these wilds," he said, his voice sunk to a contrite undertone that might not reach the dwellers near the street. "We are blunt and rudely outspoken, but we be not all cowards and ruffians!"

She was still silent, but as the road grew rougher and they crossed behind the church into the Old Way by the Mill Pond, she slipped her hand once more upon his sleeve and might have felt the leaping welcome, the thankful yielding to the touch, as he bent his arm to give her better resting place.

They went slowly in the uneven path. Roger could hear the soft rustle of her gown even when the warm south wind was freest among the tree-tops. Sense and inward sight were all confounded. The kindly dark that kept them side by side did not blot her face from his seeing. Sometimes it was in the periagua glowing against the blue; sometimes gazing downward, radiant and unconscious, upon the Governor; oftenest, as at that moment, with none near but himself to guess

the loveliness hidden in the shadows of the blossomed May.

Yet that which possessed him wholly, inescapably, was herself; and it was the spirit of her, brave, mirthful, full of laughter for the world; tender, ineffable, within that inner citadel wherein she was entrenched, that held and mastered him. How he knew her, how the treasure so deeply hidden, so inaccessibly far to seek, was plain to him while still he waited before the outer defences of her life, he might not have said. But he knew.

Beneath the grave distance, the apparent calm, that gave her friendly reassurance, his whole nature rose to the height of that for which he longed, and through their scattered talk showed itself in sudden comprehensions, in swift expression of the thought she had not uttered. How much or how little of this was guessed by her she did not betray and he was content that she went beside him in the shade without fear and without coldness, meting to him, as it seemed, what she might have given to any one who had set her on her way.

"Have a care here. 'Tis a broken path and ill to keep," he cautioned as they got deeper into the lane.

"'Tis the unthinking who go safest," she answered quickly. "To think invites disaster." She stopped suddenly with a little ejaculation in which pain and a vexed sense of helplessness caught perplexedly. "I fear I must rest—I turned my foot upon the stones——"

Grief for the pain, anger at his own selfishness in bringing her by the longer way fought against his grasping joy in the added minutes.

Swiftly he found her a seat on the trunk of a willow bent camel-wise to the ground. Every tree and rock of the place was known to him. The way they travelled led past his own door.

"'Tis easier now. The riband of my shoe had pressed somewhat too harshly." The girl's tone was relieved. Roger leaning upon the trunk left erect beside its twisted mate turned toward her, not daring to repeat his offer of aid.

"If it be a sprain, 'twere best bound firmly," he said marvelling at the commonplace of his words. How long must she have kept her pace beside him stabbed at every step by the keenness of the pang, hoping to find her destination before endurance failed.

"'Tis nothing so unkind as a sprain—but 'twill serve'!" Her voice, low and clear with the suffering hopefully suppressed, heartened him.

"Mercutio was worse wounded than he said. How may I know 'tis not the same with you!"

"By the proof," she answered promptly, essaying to rise but forced back again upon her seat. "Wait but a little till I loose the other band. It is no more than a bruise. The stone was sharp. 'Tis a sin to so detain you, sir. You are most patient." Her voice had lost the child's dependence and gave but frank and formal acknowledgment.

Roger's mind worked rapidly, his plan ready if it appeared she could not walk. At any hazard she should be saved from the petty gossip of the town. But his words, solicitous, disclaiming thanks, took instantly the note of her own, matching her formality with more careful distance.

Even in her helplessness there was a strength in her presence, positive and regnant. Roger recognized it, unassertive as it was for any weaker comprehension. It increased his tenderness. Here was one who would ask no ease from others, beg with no soft pleadings for sympathy and support, one who would hide her griefs, her needs, where only love stronger than her reticence might come to share them. To serve the weak is knightly, but to serve the strong is more surely blessed. He seemed to look upward to immeasurable heights to find her, and all the while to know the joy her yielded trust would be.

"Then the good Mercutio hath friends in Boston even though there be no playhouses," she was saying as she made a more successful venture to stand upright.

"Not so many as he deserves," Roger replied, coming anxiously to her assistance. "Be careful—I pray you! We are close on the water's edge."

She had brought keenly to him an unforgotten martyrdom, the burning of his mother's Shakespeare—his stolen kingdom, wrested from him and dismembered with unloving hands.

The Maid took her first steps firmly, making light of his anxiety. The air had grown warmer, beating on them in soft waves of heat, a touch of the summer's maturer fervour in the sweetness of the New England spring. The earth was cradled in the warmth, a warmth to be recalled with hope even when it should be repented in sleety rain and winds out of the biting east. It made a refuge of thedark, and eased the strain upon men's thoughts,

giving repose to nerves too winter-worn and tense.

To Roger it brought not so much repose as freedom. The fear of self-betrayal, the trammelling doubt of his own wish or word, had gone, and left him unconstrained, franker even than the maid; for though the fair directness of her speech was marred by no pretended coyness, it opened to him no approach. Neither in the short rest beside the water nor after in the deserted thoroughfares did its barriers weaken. If she deemed he might have rated her too freely for her greeting of the Governor, with this escapade to add to its strangeness, she showed at least how far she was from easy friendliness.

And yet happiness was strong in the man, and only a sense of her suffering prevailed to give it pause. As he talked, following the play of his own fancy for the first time allowed to have its way, he grew never flippant; beneath the shoreward ripple of their broken and desultory speaking sounded ever the oncoming tide.

If some sure consciousness within herself was fused by the fine alchemy of the night to oneness with his mood it sunk itself in silence; and for his unfathomed consciousness of her there was no token save in a remoter homage. Still it had been a spirit dull of apprehension that had not felt the appeal, electrical and potent, of what their speech denied.

At her gate she dismissed him somewhat coldly.

"I see there is a stranger within, or Madam and her brother should add their thanks to mine," she said with neutral courtesy.

A strain of music had broken in upon the words, the first notes of a violin skilfully played. Roger could see the vines that trailed upon the walls blown in loose tendrils across the lighted panes. The lilt of the melody was new to him. His feeling answered it as sound follows the bow. It woke upon the echo of her coldness like the return of the night's enchantment, controlling, assonant.

He moved, to answer her, his voice chiming with the melody, the same thrill in its low modulations; and as he moved, the yellow light streamed in a golden mist across his face. He had lifted his hat from his head for his farewell, and the comeliness that his inmost soul regarded with aversion, that had been made his reproach and scorn throughout his life, came all at once upon the girl's awaiting sight.

Strong-featured, cleanly framed in the early New England mould where the survivals had need to be the best, there was nothing shambling or uncouth in the figure the light but half disclosed. The charm of it, the difference, lay in something that had ever puzzled his father and sent a contentment ill-shepherded by fears to his mother's heart.

It may be that the look he turned to her, the look the night had wrought, made nobler revelation than his words. A change came in her voice—her face still in the shadow—and there was in the iteration of her own words a sudden faith.

"I cannot say—how much I thank you, Sir."

Involuntarily she held out her hand to meet his, outstretched for it, and the grasp gave into her keeping something of the real Roger Verring that his father would never know.

And if the look, the clasp, the clasp of force made gentle without loss, went with her as she entered, it was they that armoured her with a profound and gracious dignity as she met Sir Humphrey Wildglass, so that he cast upon her a sudden glance that questioned her composure.

Roger, turning backward as he went, saw but the deep obeisance of this stranger of the violin and the smiling gallantry that gave admiring welcome to the maid.

Sharp anger and foreboding torture struck rending claws through all the substance of his dream. The night grew heavy and its deeps but better hiding for the things of dread. The wind brought dampness and the chill of unknown sorrows in its breath.

Yet his pulses, fervent still to heed the vibrant touch of her hand within his own, sank to no slower measure, and as he retraced his way, the warmth of memory battled with the gloom, and the soft ministry of the night came back in mingled pain and hope.

## CHAPTER XII

### IN THE FOREST OF FEARS

"This world is a forest of fears,
Where each sinner must strive for his soul."

THE tide was low in Mill Creek and the water from the Pond, creeping over the dam and around the sluice gates, fell with a sharp trickle into the canal. In the depressing quiet of the evening the salty waters leaking toward the sea from their imprisonment upon the land had to Roger a sound of drear futility.

To the jealous wretchedness that kept before him the picture of Sir Humphrey, new pain was added as he traversed the familiar streets. Conscience, the Puritan self-consciousness forever irritated with unnatural remorse, arraigned him brutally. Against the turmoil of his thoughts it matched the Sabbath calm; against the bare severity of Boston ways it held up the gay complexity of a world he had not known. All that was best and finest, all that was strenuous and ideal, in the simpler world gave garish unreality to the warmth and colour by which he had been drawn. Perfume and brightness, the "delight of the eye and the pride of life"—how the mere joy of bodily existence had thrilled him! And on the day hallowed for the service of Heaven how his soul had yielded itself to the fiddler's skill so that it yet craved mightily for more of that subtle excitation!

And the Maid! Shut away from him by barriers that made her an alien, built around with conceptions, prejudices, hatreds, for all that he held sacred—counting men like Nicolas Verring as canting hypocrites and the homely labors of pioneers as degradation—how should she be reached by him? Even if, abandoning every loyalty that claimed his faith, he gave his all, body and soul, in feverish warfare with these bristling distances between, what chance had he? How should the sombre provincial hope to win against a gallant like him who had bowed before her in the lighted room, whose graces were brought from her home across the sea, whose language was her own and grated with no unpleasant harshness of the unfamiliar?

Early as it was, few windows were still alight, even the Orange Tree Inn showing no glimpse or gleam of a yellow ray. At the head of Cross street, its wide acreage of land leading back through the blossoming trees to the Old Way by the Pond, the house of Nicolas Verring dominated its fellows. It was of stone, uncompromising in outline, massive as prisons are, and far more stoutly built than the prison of its own town, whose sunken sills let in the winter cold and little drifts of snow upon the victims it immured. No flowers broke the grassy circuit of the yard, save where a clump of lilacs had waved their purple fronds beneath Roger's window every springtime since, a tiny lad, he had first waked in the unsullied dawn to know their fragrance in his room. Every year Nicolas Verring threatened to cut them down. Every year Madam Verring interceded and they remained.

"The snare of the senses," the man had repeated with each renewal of the contest. "Sometimes it feareth me to think, Alison, that Roger hath from thee so strong a yearning for the things of earth. Surely never yet did I give inordinate affection to that which had no soul."

The words came back to Roger's mind as he climbed the hill. He had listened in his earliest years with a fast-beating heart, feeling in some occult child fashion the symbolism of the purple blooms. His mother had taken meekly the reproach; a flush of guilty assent had risen ever in her cheeks, and she had looked warningly first at her husband, then at the too attentive child.

"I also fear it, Nicolas," she had answered calmly. "It hath seemed to me the voice of God spoke to me in the flowers, but I have striven to overcome the thought," quenching the light in the child's eyes swiftly lest what her words had kindled prove of the Devil. "'Tis ever too easy to mistake our pleasure for a Higher Will."

Her very meekness had disarmed the rebuke. Afterward she had been quieter, a sadness settled in her eyes and about her mouth, at other times prone to smiles instead of sighs. Once she had wept. The child's impression rose suddenly from that strange sub-consciousness that overflows the past, full of the impotence of pained revolt. A great weight rested on his heart. He paused a moment at the gate and looked soberly at the forbidding shadow of his home. The memory took form in the shadow clearer than the shapes of the night but mingled with them. The inner

life in which the boy had grown became daily more vivid with the man, the outer more and more a husk attached nowhere to his real self save as a shelter to its nakedness.

"Thou lovest the lad more than is consistent with his welfare." His father's warning utterance returned to him, distinct and cheerless. "'Tis thy way to love too greatly. 'Tis rather a stumbling block than a fitting guidance."

"Have I been a 'stumbling block' to thee, Nicolas?" his mother had asked in a voice so low it had seemed but the voice of the spirit.

Nicolas Verring had waited before he answered. When he had spoken his own voice had been less didactic.

"'Tis meet a woman should give homage to her husband," he had replied. "He is her natural head, as is Christ to the Church. 'Tis not in reason that his greater strength should thereby suffer harm." His voice had grown hard again with the cold severity of the lawgiver and the judge. Lines of famine had cut themselves about the mother's sensitive lips. A heat of miserable rage had burned smotheringly in the lad's heart. Then Nicolas Verring had rested his hand upon his wife's head in a swift gesture of retraction.

"Nay, Alison," he said, "the fault be mine if my need of thee be too quick for a higher need. How should I lead thee upward, my own eyes being cast upon the ground?"

The hardness in his father's voice had been changed to a shriller note, a note of strain, of anxious striving, heard often in the long climax of his

prayers and carrying to the child's soul a sense of awe, of woe impending, scarce to be averted. His mother had risen at the words, gladness breaking through her look of grief.

"I would sooner die than be to thee a hindrance, a makeweight, Nicolas," she had said, still low but with a kind of passion new to the boy. "I would ever be to thee a better wife, worthier to walk with thee in the higher fellowship."

It was then, for the first time, the little lad had seen how beautiful his mother was. He remembered, as he laid his hand upon the gate and waited before the silent house. He had heard, since, that of all the maids of Plymouth, Alison Cole had been esteemed most wonderfully fair. Comprehension of the father's look, the look of struggle, came to Roger in the illumination that sometimes shows the unexplored within our own domain. And that remembered talk had been many years before, when his father had been but little older than the present Roger. Was it this same madness that Nicolas Verring had fought down, this same unnamable tenderness and joy?

Oppressed with the sense of treason to his home, he grew wretched unspeakably, wrought upon by the certainty of his own evil will, tortured in all his frank outspoken nature with a consciousness that would be held a mortal sin. For he knew, even in the gloom of stern abasement, that the fire the night had kindled would burn with a stronger glow for every adverse wind of doubt and that he should not pray to be delivered from either its compelling warmth or its unrelenting pain. Was

he indeed unfit to be the son of Nicolas Verring and Alison, his wife?

He swung back the gate and walked steadily up the path, hearing still his mother's voice. So in a kind of humbleness of frame he opened the massive door and entered. His mother's eyes, anxious, questioning, were upon him as he lifted the latch. Something he had always found before seemed lacking from their confidence.

The candles in their silver candlesticks shone vaguely on her smooth hair; on her dress, speckless, plain, and costly as became her station; on the straight collar of lace whereon even yet her husband was wont to comment doubtfully; and upon the face still fair, still sensitive, but grown less facile to the touch of feeling held so ruthlessly in subjection.

The room was dim save in the circle of the two candles, the fire long since banked for the night. Faint gleams shot from the polished brass of the andirons and from the china ranged upon the wall. The carved settle and the rush-bottomed chairs, the tall cupboard and the walnut desk, peopled the dimness with black shapes. The silence was grave, full of a grim suspense.

Nicolas Verring sat in the leather-cushioned seat his father had brought from Devon, and the monsters upon its upright posts peered at Roger from either side the set and accusing features. He was rigidly upright, neither lounging nor leaning, his Bible open on his knee. The mother's gaze turned from Roger's face and sought her husband's. He read on till the chapter was ended, placed the mark at the point upon which his eye had last rested, and closed the book.

Roger had moved toward his mother impulsively as if to speak, but at his father's look he waited.

"Where hast thou kept the Sabbath eve?"

The words, natural in themselves, conveyed the accusation of the look. They might have been the words of a public prosecutor, so positive they seemed in a prejudgment of evil doing. The humility went out of the son as he heard. He had been condemned and by a method unjust, inexorable. His mother's expression had lost already its first aloofness. Her eyes dwelt on him, confident of his truth.

Roger saw nothing of the confidence. He had fixed his gaze upon his father's face and his look was as direct, as unbending, as the one he met. In the first heat of his resentment he kept silence. His father waited but briefly. An arbitrariness inevitable to him who believes himself Heaven-appointed interpreter and administrator of the divine decrees added a peremptory coldness to his command.

"Speak, Sir."

"I tarried to guide a stranger lost in the streets."

The sense of unworthiness, of failure, was gone; the painful presentiment of this very battle—the contest renewed of nature and fanaticism, the oppression of his thoughts, lifted. A kind of strength born of the contempt for injustice was growing within him.

In every line of his figure he was himself a Verring. The erectness of a carriage none too pliant in the elders was softened in him to something less stiff, a certain unlovely obstinancy of gait mobilized to

gentler freedom in the younger man. But the power of resistance, the vigour of insistent, unthwartable personality, was as virile, as determined, the steel of the Verring will as unbreakable, as if it had been more harshly sheathed. In his voice was less impatience, more self-mastery, than in his father's.

To Nicolas Verring, this very erectness, this fearlessness, was doubly evidence of a hardened heart.

"Another drunkard shielded in his crime?" he demanded inflexibly. "Another maid protected in her wantonness? What affinity hath my son with wine-bibbers and harlots?"

"Thou art wrong, sir." Roger did not raise his voice, but a white fire of indignation seemed to purify the air of his father's spoken thought. "And as for poor Rumney, 'twas the King's agent led him astray and he was but a lad. 'Twould have killed Dame Rumney had the boy been set in the pillory for the town to mock at. And for the maid who walked with him, she was as innocent as any, save for the imprudence. Whom should a man protect, I'd ask to know? Are there none weak but cripples? And had she been bad as the worst, 'twas Christ Himself protected Mary of Magdalene!"

Had he blasphemed, no greater horror could have repudiated his utterance.

"With thy countenance thou but sendest them farther on the road to Hell. 'Tis work the Devil prospers, and doing it thy foot is entered already on the way that leadeth to destruction."

The anxious intentness of the mother approved the words.

"They that touch pitch shall be defiled," Nicolas Verring ended with solemn emphasis.

"Then 'twere well we went not to meeting," answered the son recklessly. "There's pitch there in high places would make poor Rumney look spotless enough!"

"Silence, Sir!" The imperious will of the elder raged in the new command. "Who taught thee to slander the righteous and to uphold the wicked? What is my offence before God that my son, my only son, should be a byword and a hissing to the chosen people?" He rose vehemently, strong misery in his convulsed face. "Judge Sewall leaneth upon his Samuel, even Christopher Munch may dwell with pride upon his Jacob——"

"Aye—a 'Jacob' indeed!" interjected Roger unheard.

"While I,—I must be shamed in the sight of men——"

"Nay, Nicolas." The mother's protest came with a sharp recoil upon the word. "Roger hath never shamed thee——"

"'Tis ever thus thou wouldst shield him, woman! I say again 'tis to send him the faster to damnation. 'Tis for this I am guilty—that I put not an end to it long since. Beware that in the wicked indulgence of thy weakness thou hast not his soul to thy account!"

The accusation so fiercely turned upon herself beat down the wife's interference with a mortal dread. Had she destroyed her son?

"If I am saved 'twill be the faith of my mother saves me." Roger's words were low, carrying

their own conviction. "She hath belief in my honour. Even Rufus Gillam believed my word, but a criminal hath more chance with Nicolas Verring than his son."

"Roger!"

The mother gazed fearfully at the two, so alike in their antagonism, so necessary to each other, so brutally tearing at the quick of each other's life. If Roger had been given a mother more like his father this need not have been.

"He that denies his Maker and reviles the righteous will hardly spare his father." The allusion to Captain Gillam had touched Nicolas Verring where he was most vulnerable, in his pride of infallibility, and in his distrust of the influences to which he had exposed the boy.

He had seated himself again. Roger walked up and down the room, a clairvoyant sense of his father's grief fastened on him in wretched compunction.

"No more of thy idle evasions! Where hast thou spent the evening of the Sabbath?" The compunction died. His father's tone made an atmosphere in which it could not live. "Another brawl!" The man pointed in bitter triumph to the blood upon Roger's hand. It had trickled through the fingers from the cut made by the sword.

"The rapier of a drunken vagabond—one of two whom I beat off with some trouble," the son began. Madam Verring half rose from her chair. Her face, white already, could have gone no whiter. "'Tis nothing, mother. 'Twill barely show when 'tis bathed," he reassured her quickly.

The father's features had but sharpened to greater sternness.

"Where found'st thou brawlers betwixt here and Mr. Mather's?"

A slight consciousness appeared for the first time in Roger's manner, but he did not hesitate.

"They were on Fish street, by the entrance to Sun court——"

"What brought thee there?"

"I heard a cry. The bullies were frightening a woman. I——"

"A woman! What manner of woman goes abroad at such an hour and in that neighbourhood? Another 'innocent' belike!"

The younger man stood for an instant rigid. His whole being swirled in the vortex of a consuming anger. The words came like defilement upon the purity of his exaltation and they drove him in involuntary disgust and loathing to a more hopeless distance. When he spoke his voice was violent in suppression.

"'Tis not Christian so to wrong the guiltless. The maid was a stranger, lost and terrified, and gave me no more than civil thanks, not even her name."

"'Maid'!" The cold edge of the father's contempt drew across a bare nerve. The rasp of it went through the son in a rage insensate as mania.

"Wert thou another man I could kill thee for that sneer," he cried below his breath.

His mother stepped suddenly before him; lofty reproof blazed in her eyes.

"Thou canst speak so to the father whose great-

est wish is thy welfare! And all because he hath wonder at a maid who goeth wandering alone and at the wharfside in the night! What spell is on thee? What of this woman?"

Roger had shrunk more at the echo of his own words than at her reproaches. He looked dazed, worn with the pain of stabs given and received.

"'Tis as I said," he repeated. "She is a stranger and had lost her way—trying to get past the crowd around the Town House. While she wandered the dusk came on." His gaze was straightly on his mother's.

"And how came it thou wast near?" she asked

"I left my company at the Governor's——"

"What!" put in his father sharply.

"The press was thick about Green lane and I crossed by Sir William's orchard——"

"Thou, an officer, left thy company, without reason!"

"'Twas an impulse—to escape the throng."

"Thou'rt the first Verring to desert a soldier's post for such an 'impulse'. Art thou a weakling? And was't 'impulse' guided thee to Fish street?"

"I was absent, Sir. I hardly know which way I went." The taunt was answered quietly. Memory of his moment's frenzy, the horror of his own words whose meaning no Puritan born could lightly forget still subdued his wrath. But though his tone was quiet, a flush rose in his cheeks so that his mother saw, and Nicolas Verring, peering upon his son with a host of evil imaginings poisoning the look, saw too, but his interpretation was other than the mother's.

"The truth, Sir. Do not lie," he shouted. The white heat of his anger hissed in the words. They sounded loud as thunderclaps in the ears of those who heard, and none replied. All were standing. Nicolas Verring in his frowning wrath grew more terrible. Formidable, waiting, his eyes held a steelly grasp upon his son.

The son returned the gaze steadfastly. The horror with which he had recognized his own "I could kill thee" was no deeper than his horror at this more deadly thrust. Something seemed lost, gone for all time, in the tie which bound him to his father.

"Roger, wilt thou answer thy mother?" She had drawn nearer, her hand upon his arm. "I believe thy word—thy father's son will not falsify his word—but my heart is sore. Who is this maid? Was't she in Madam Fitch's window? How came the girl hither? With whom does she abide?"

"Nay, mother," Roger looked down at her gravely.—"She said naught of herself, but she bides with the strangers lately come to the house that was the Widow Pullen's."

"Hadst thou seen her before?"

"I saw her at the window." His eyes darkened. He seemed older. The man Roger, no longer the boy.

"Thou hadst never seen her before that? Never in London when thou wast there?"

"No." The denial came impatiently from his lips. It was clear his mother doubted him at last. Her hand dropped from his sleeve. With that withdrawal a sense of desertion, of betrayal, broke desolately upon him.

"Have I permission to go, Sir?" he asked coldly. To Nicolas Verring the request was but added defiance.

"Aye—go," he answered in tones grimmer than cursing.

Nothing could have seemed further from his attitude than weeping, but as Roger passed him and laid his hand upon the polished stair rail to ascend, the man bowed his head upon the table and cried out aloud in the Scripture lament of them that are forsaken, a cry that brought his son to his side with swift steps—contrite, his heart broken with the grief he had wrought.

"Father!"

"Away with thee, and see that the night bring repentance. Other men have sons. I have but a——"

"Nicolas!" Alison Verring had come near with her boy. "Nicolas, hear him," she pleaded. "He is sad to grieve thee so."

"I hear him not till he be brought to a true repentance." Nicolas Verring lifted upon his wife a look of grey displeasure. "And go thou not near him, but pray for his sins for that he hath this evil inheritance from thee." His eyes glittered in the smarting tears that gave abnormal brilliancy to their fanatic anger; misery looked out beneath the outraged majesty of the dismissal. "Pray," he repeated harshly, "as I shall pray, for light and the revelation to make visible the Hand of the Lord in what is now accursed."

Roger, like one struck in the face when his arms are tied, stood up to his full height, then turned and went, without a backward glance.

The wife lingered.

"Nicolas—thou wilt not drive me from thee—my husband. What grief should we not share?"

He was silent.

He watched her as she opened the door into their chamber and watched it close. Still he did not move. Through the open shutters the odour of the lilacs crept on the soft wind.

It roused him to new anger and he stumbled to the window and shut it violently against the perfume of the offending flower.

To him the soothing fragrance was but another attack of that insidious Will with which he had vainly fought in this evil night. The thought spurred him to stronger wrestlings. It should not prevail. Beset on every side, believing the Tempter's clutch to be coiling like octopus arms upon his son and fastening even to his wife, alone, he threw himself upon his knees and strove, single-handed, against the Power of Hell.

## CHAPTER XIII

### PILGRIM AND PURITAN

THE same perfume came in the upper windows and mingled with the hopelessness of Roger's thoughts, so that the fragrance of lilac blooms seemed ever after to bring with it the sense of woe, of dull disaster and regret.

The hour went wretchedly on. Better to face reproof, remonstrance, than this aloofness. His nature, ardent like his mother's, starved hungrily in silence, and groped in the cheerless dark for the threads of the broken harmony. In his most actual self he could never be content with discord. The love of battle for its own sake was not in him. The impulse that drove him to contests which brought upon him his father's condemnation was but revolt from cruelty, injustice, the offence of the strong against the weak; these alone were what made agreement hateful.

Nicolas Verring could not see the difference in the motive. To him a blow was a blow, and the temper that struck, quarrelsome and malicious. The pride of family, the sense of caste and station, as tyrannous with the Puritan as his terror of evil spirits, made the fear of gossip, the chance of publicity doubly revolting.

Alison Verring was of those who had heard from the lips of grandmothers the tale of the Leyden sojourn, and of the cheerful ways of the Dutch cities.

A mellowness and a sweetness from those days had ripened in the lives of the Pilgrims. Not given to autocratic interference with others, imbued with a more wholesome faith, that had less fear of happiness and simpler and more vital hold on God, the men of Plymouth preserved for their children a higher type of practice, a less rigid channel of belief.

In this third generation the truer essence of their faith was tinctured with the intolerance of their Puritan neighbours, but in Alison its truth was undefiled and she gave her boy her best inheritance, heightened and deepened by the pure intensity of her own nature.

All the sacramental joy of her marriage, all the aspirations of her patriotism, of her love for New England, all the ecstasies of her faith, she had wrought into his being in the days when kneeling in thankful prayer or singing her magnificat in the ardours of her work she had waited for his coming.

A happy light was ever round her as she moved. In its radiance, a radiance shining through dark mists of the Puritan creed, Roger had sunned himself. Bereft of her he would have been forlorn unspeakably. With her, an ever-present, encompassing comprehension, he had grown up unwarped, and with the native spring and buoyancy of his clean youth not wholly overborne.

A sense of humour she had as well, and often reproached herself as the scalpel of the boy's tongue slit the cover from some hypocritic deed and laughter rose within her at the aptness of his comment. If she smiled, then for weeks she scourged herself lest she had been his tempter to further trespassing,

and sat through the hour of his punishment with the lash that bit his tender flesh buried in the quivering of her heart. Sometimes it lasted long, till the child had well-nigh fainted under it, uttering no sound but reeling as he stood.

Afterward, bathing the cruel marks, she had laid soft linen upon them and oftenest had said no word for fear of self-betrayal, but once, rising to the supreme of anguished effort, she had spoken—coldly that the admonition might have effect.

"Thou wilt remember, Roger. Thou wilt not grieve us so again."

There had been no answer but an angry sound, and she had spoken no more, knowing well the fire of rage burning in the boy's soul. That he could let her come near at all showed how wonderful was the bond that held them.

As the lad grew older she had sometimes made bold to plead against the father's misconception.

"'Tis not always sinful to do battle," once she had said. "Thy own father was no mean fighter."

"Against a tyrant," he had answered.

"There be other tyrants than kings," she had replied swiftly, then fallen silent at her spinning, her cheeks hot with her defence.

But her husband had persisted, setting forth his words, slow and separate, that she might not miss his meaning. Hers he had not fathomed, and passed over as fanciful and ill-considered.

"'Tis one thing to fight and gain a nation's freedom, and another to brawl in the common street and gain but an evil reputation," he had said pon-

derously. "Why should one meddle with what concerns him not?"

This had been before Roger was sent away with Master Gillam upon the *Hopewell*. From that time she had not failed to persevere in the struggle to make father and son understand each other. When the two were apart or when no disputed deed rose between them all went well, and a mutual confidence and pride asserted itself in both, but too often the strife was renewed over the old ground and she could only suffer, waiting for better counsel.

As Roger looked into the cloudy night its sweetness taunted him. Why was the Devil in all the earth and air beguiling man with wiles and stratagems—life but a ceaseless vigil in the midst of the unseen, the perilous, that which seemed most heavenly a lure of hell?

After the worst smart of the final rebuff, the knowledge of his father's struggle disquieted him. He remembered the half-heard words of prohibition and knew that his mother would not come, and her grief, solitary like his own, deepened the oppression.

And she, too, distrusted him. She was conscious that somewhere he had been false! He had said that he had not seen the Maid before. "In London?" she had asked. It was that he had answered—but he put the thought away. He had meant they should believe he had seen her for the first time, that day. If he had refused to answer, if he had assented, how could they fail sooner or later to connect this recognition of a stranger barely

arrived in Boston with the sea voyage of his boyhood? And that would be treachery, even to the forgetting of his oath on the *Araby Rose*.

For a space he could have hated the thought of the Little Maid. Who was she to break his father's heart and put lies in the mouth of a man? He had never, so far as he was aware, given his direct word to a lie before. It hurt with the sordid ache of a besmirching misery.

Yet what was that to danger, to certain danger for the life of the Maid!

He felt he must escape to action. It was intolerable—to sit here in the darkened house, in the chill of the stone walls, and give himself over to fiends that pinched and tore, to the thought of his father in the room below pouring out a vexed and stricken soul in fierce supplication, to the thought of the slow dropping of his mother's tears as she knelt in remorseful agony, confessing her sin of too much love! His mother—a scorching ran across his eyes—the wisest, dearest, purest! No woman should again cost her this martyrdom.

He threw himself down by the window, his head buried in his arms, and prayed silently. The air blowing cold from across the Pond brought the marshy smell of the banks. Through the quiet he could hear the water yet trickling above the dam. Far beyond, toward the Common, the chorus of frogs droned distantly, and everywhere there went a stir through the Sabbath calm, the stir of spring and hope.

The sense of the irreparable, the inexorable, lightened. He moved as if to rise and seek his

father. He would not sleep unforgiven. But as he rose he heard the door close into his mother's room. He dared not follow lest he offend again. The grief of griefs, that he should have said those words "I could kill thee" was again upon him, and with them came memory of the provocation.

Recollection travelled in swift leaps. And she did not like Jacob Munch! A comforting warmth broke faintly over him at the thought. Poor Little Maid! Again he saw her in the pictures of the past, in the reality of the present—as she had lain in the Captain's arms, unconscious from long suffering; afterward, as she had told her tale, again as she had drunk the "safe home" and the pledge of the *Rose*. And now she was here—here in Boston, the dark eyes no longer mournful, the beautiful frank way, the vivid charm, but franker, more potent.

In his restlessness he fought again the battle by the wharfside with the sailors. But were they sailors? The man who had first fled and then returned—he was no sailor. Sailors went not cloaked and armed with swords. Nor had he been so drunken as his fellow. Then why the attack? And in concert with so low a ruffian? The Maid had worn no jewels. Could her cousin, could Gregory Bellingham—but that were preposterous to imagine!

Why had he not told her he was Roger Verring? And the fiddle—on the Sabbath eve! All that was beautiful, ungodly, that was her world! Vague trouble of the knowledge fell upon him almost sleeping.

The trouble lingered in his slumbers and carried

him through doleful strivings to desolate ends, through long pursuits, where the Maid ever evaded his coming, till he found his father perishing beyond his reach, or his mother lying dead beside his path, the look of reproachful grief set forever on her moveless lips.

Then the long misery changed. His mother went with him in the quest and gave him comfort without words. With her presence peace fell upon his sleep, and only the robins loud in their delight brought him from its easeful deeps.

The Sabbath morning was cheerily aflame. Yet Roger's eyes in their first awakening rested not on the fair colouring without, nor on the spotlessness within, but on the dull hues of the Indian shawl with which his mother's hands had covered him while he slept.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE GOVERNOR'S DINNER

"A health to the native born."

ROGER bowed deeply, the more profoundly for the suddenness of the surprise. The blood that had risen to his face receded, leaving him the handsomer for the pallor.

The invitation to the Governor's dinner, bearing at the top the knightly seal in careful graving, had failed to ease the tightening struggle of the ten days since the arrival of Sir William, a struggle that had contracted to one desire, the longing to see the Little Maid.

The invitation had said nothing of his fellow-guests, and the factions that ranged themselves for and against the Charter were too marked to make social fusion probable. The Little Maid, he had argued, would be invited only with the other following. He should spend the evening with the Lieutenant-Governor Stoughton and the disaffected and anxious who dwelt unhopefully on the meaning of a royal governorship.

The reasoning was good; but hope yields not to reason, and as the great door of Sir William's mansion had shut him from the cool raindrops and the dripping trees and the long reaches of garden and orchard lying drenched under the heavy skies, it had beat strong within him. When he had entered the square parlours he had looked from one room to

the other in rapid search before he had bent to Lady Phips with the ease, distinguished and unconscious, already marked and condemned by those to whom it savoured of the "levity" of courts.

At the same instant he had seen her, near them both but turned a little aside to hear a question, vivid even in the silent waiting of her arrested look, the very soul of the complex life that filled the scene.

In Lady Phips a certain air of affectionate possession, a certain pride, showed delicately as she greeted him. Here was a provincial born and bred who would shame no hostess with an awkward speech, a graceless forgetfulness. It was at her formal words which made Captain Verring known to Mistress Armitage that the blood had flown back suddenly upon Roger's heart and left him pale. The moment seemed but the answer of a demand grown too peremptory for denial, a response inevitable, yet amazing as the expected miracle of summer.

The surrounding groups, conversing in stately phrases, stiff and seemly, or chattering in tones keyed to the note of the festivity, moved away. The three were left, for a little, quite alone with the Governor, who had returned to his wife after a genial excursion among his friends. Splendid in gold embroidery and Mechlin, he was as sturdy and commanding as in the plainer days of the *Rose*.

"How now—Mary! He knows my Little Maid already. Bother not with presentations."

Lady Phips looked from Roger to the girl and then at her husband, amiably chiding.

"Sir William forgets that Mistress Armitage is newly come from a world of greater ceremony than ours!"

"Nay, Lady Phips, but I find it quite the other way!" Mistress Armitage replied. "'Tis Boston is the land of ceremony. I fear to transgress its decorum each time I go abroad."

"Thou but mockest us, child." My lady shook her head reproachfully, the look of pleasure in her face deepening to a smile at the girl's expression of humorous protest.

"'Tis the untutored truth. I shall not sleep o' nights till I be better instructed." She turned to the elder woman with whimsical pleading. "I pray you take some leisure hour to give me lessons," she begged; then her manner dropped all at once to the plane of sober restraint. "Captain Verring will tell you that I need them greatly," she added with graver emphasis. "It was he rescued me from my worst indiscretion."

Her eyes rested on his, a bravely mastered trouble in their look. If her colour had unaccountably heightened as Roger bowed, none but Lady Phips had seen it, and the brief embarrassment had passed into relief as the Governor's welcome pressed down, to running over, the measure of his wife's. Whoever her champion might be, it was sure Sir William trusted him.

Roger's eyes had lighted to disclaim the gravity in her own.

"It is scarce to be counted an indiscretion to lose one's way in Shawmut lanes," he answered quickly. "'Tis a tribute demanded of every stranger."

The trouble went out of her look as he spoke.

"Oh, if 'tis then part of the code——" The seriousness was dispersed in laughter.

Sir William had gazed with delighted interest from one to the other.

"'Twas thou, my lad! I might have known 'twas thou. 'Tis his good fate to attend thee in misfortune, eh Frances?" He had come closer to the Little Maid, an unwonted gentleness softening his bluff tones.

"Sh—Not *Frances.*" Lady Phips touched his sleeve warningly. A passing wonder had crossed the girl's face at his use of the name,and she glanced involuntarily at Roger.

"Tut-tut! None heard, and our Captain is discreet. Moreover he may not use it if he would—poor lad!" The Governor laughed again, slyly, clapping the young man upon the shoulder. "We are more to be depended on than my Little Maid herself, for she told her own tale to thee, Mary! I had not dreamed so great a rashness!"

Clearly Sir William did not know that the Maid had failed to recognize in Captain Verring the boy of the *Araby Rose.* Roger saw that she was mystified by the Governor's allusion, and saw, too, at the same time, that among those who watched her without seeming to interrupt their own discourse was one he had not before perceived. The discovery brought him the pang of instant anger. His hostess had followed his look.

"Thou knowest Sir Humphrey Wildglass?" she asked.

"I have seen him—often in the last week,"

Roger answered, his eyes coming back to the Governor's wife and dwelling briefly on the girl's face as they came. "I do not know him. What is his mission in Boston?"

"None can tell, but there is great conjecture," began Lady Phips. The Governor had gone apart with a long-visaged one who was plying him with a catechism of censorious import. His wife lowered her voice without changing her expression of cheerful hospitality. "It is like he comes to watch the conduct of affairs and give secret advices to the King," she finished.

"But that would be spying!" The girl spoke quickly, with a look Roger misunderstood. He thought she would defend the man. The thought added to an antagonism already recalled by the sight of the cavalier. Sir Humphrey had fixed his eyes upon them more openly, regarding in turn each speaker. The approach of a new bevy of guests changed their positions and Roger moved, as if inadvertently, to intercept the stranger's view of the Maid. Sir Humphrey moved at the same time and with the same seeming inadvertence.

"Have you known him long?"

The girl answered Roger's question with the directness he remembered. "No," she said. "I saw him for the first time on that evening when I was lost. It was he who played the violin," and either at the intentness of Roger's look or at some recollection he did not share, her colour deepened.

"Thou wilt not repeat the idle suspicion——" Their hostess had disposed of the newcomers and turned back to them.

"Nay, Lady Phips, I can be discreet as another! And did I not beg instructions? You will find me as obedient—as Captain Verring finds his men!"

"I fear Mistress Armitage is more used to command than to obey." The yellow warmth of the candles added youth to Sir Humphrey's graces. He took quiet possession of the Maid. There was about him the powerful attraction of a strong will clothed upon with soft indifference. "Madam Chanterell is waiting," he said with light assurance.

"I like not Madam Chanterell—overmuch," whispered Lady Phips. "She troubleth too little to cover her dislikes, and her brother neither came nor sent excuse, though both were bidden for the sake of the Maid. 'Twould seem the girl's affection for Sir William doth much mislike them."

Roger felt the thrill, half breathless, that followed the girl as she passed among the watching groups. A splendour went with her. But behind the glow of her beauty shone a brightness more compelling yet, the brightness of a high and fearless spirit, a spirit that exacted no tribute save truth, and gave itself no thought for the tempting of a petty homage.

Often during dinner Mistress Armitage lifted her eyes to search Roger's face in a puzzled fashion. The two were not side by side but his answering look met her own with an ever-recurring wonder. In spite of the Governor's allusion she did not know him!

Madam Chanterell saw the glances, fleeting as they were, and was disturbed. Who would have thought to find so personable a young man among these raw colonials? The very soberness of his

attire seemed a heightener of his attraction. It added a gravity to his youth, that was full of dangerous allurement to a maid surfeited with the flippancies, the facile hypocrisies, of a different world. And Madam Chanterell, now that she had come protesting into this Puritan province, meant to keep her charge as secluded as possible from its contamination. Even Sir William, governor though he might be and rightfully the recipient of the girl's gratitude, was but doubtfully acceptable. There was no indefiniteness, no indirection, in her intentions for the daughter of Francis Bellingham. She knew well the kind of man, she even thought she knew the man, who would be most suitable, most satisfactory. Anger and uneasiness grew within her as the dinner went on, for her own eyes persisted in dwelling with unreasoning pleasure upon the face she would gladly have banished from the Governor's board.

Roger was aware of her scrutiny, openly disapproving, and with an insight at once unconscious and assured, he realized what her hostility meant.

The pleasant sounds of dining floated out to mingle with the good-night twittering of the birds. The steady murmur of contented voices had gained in volume. The tones of the men were less heavy, the utterance of the women less primly subdued, as the progress of the feast wore off the awkward necessity of adjustment. Everyone had begun to feel at home in his own place and at ease with his neighbor.

The mouth of Lieutenant-Governor Stoughton had lost somewhat of its primness and the meagre

hardness of his expression had warmed to something like a faint reflection of the cheer about him. While inwardly he noticed with reprobation every detail of the event from the laces of my Lady to the buttons of the serving man, he maintained an equable aloofness and ate with an appearance of severe discrimination. Now and then he flung an obstinate negation upon an opinion of Mr. Saltonstall who left the disputed subject smoothly and swung the conversation into more peaceful channels with an adroitness Sir William envied.

Roger, a young relative of Lady Phips on either hand, talked and jested, smiled and played the gallant, as was expected of him. When his spirit flagged in the task, he pricked himself to more earnest endeavor. But always as he raised his eyes, he let them wander for a little about the long table. They rested but an instant on any face and kept but one image after their brief journey. Yet that glimpse laid each time a hand upon his pulse so that it halted for the sweetness of the touch, then leaped to meet it in a hurrying stream.

Once he answered a question in a tone dropped a little from its natural key—and a little blurred. His companion had looked up, caught the transfiguring light in his gaze and fluttered under it, aware of forces in the air she had not consciously evoked.

If only he could have heard what the Maid was saying! He could see the attention, absorbed and smiling, that waited on her words, the changing expression of faces responding with unwonted animation to her mirth or earnest. Sir Humphrey's face

was among those nearest her. Something about the man harassed and importuned him with vague remembrance. Something it was that recalled not the lighted room and the violin, but things long past, distinct from the jealousy of the present. Was it the voice? He thought so once. Mr. Increase Mather had made a stricture on the amusements of the Londoner and Sir Humphrey's tone raised in sharp repartee had held an irritated tang. But the impression was latent and elusive.

Sir Humphrey himself seemed engrossed, to every sense of others' observation, in worship of Mistress Armitage. Into his admiration he threw a force, a concentration, that struck upon Roger's mood like a blow sharp-edged and painful.

"Is not Mistress Armitage beautiful?" He had caught her name on every hand; now it came from Faith Apthorpe, his companion's sister, who deserted her roast oysters and the assiduous youth beyond to put the question to Roger. "I cannot keep my eyes from her," she went on confidingly. "Yet 'tis not her beauty neither. 'Tis as if—'tis a charm. I feel I must know her, though I've never spoken to her in my life. Every time she looks at one of those people up there I say, 'O, look at me, look at me instead!'"

Roger glanced down upon the pretty features to see if they betrayed a curious skill in irony, but it was earnest, and the eyes were fastened, not on him but upon the object of their manifest devotion. Temple Armitage saw the gaze, and as the girl smiled and nodded, she answered the smile with one as friendly, full of a glamour and warmth of interest no other admiration had drawn from her.

"There!" announced Faith triumphantly. "Beulah Munch said she was too proud and stiff to make friends but—la la—I knew 'twas not so. Didst see her, Mercy? She smiled at me as we had been friends this twelvemonth."

Mercy, whose own gaze had been fixed upon the stranger's, turned back to her sister and to Roger. She was moved still by the flash of Roger's look; and her sister's words annoyed her.

"Thou chatterest like a magpie, Faith! Why shouldst thou care if Mistress Armitage be proud or meek?"

But Roger laughed in the eyes of the enthusiast and answered for her lightly.

"Nay, Mistress Apthorpe, it speaks a lovely nature that your sister should dwell so ardently upon another's charms and forget her own!"

His voice was level and without the catch that again came upon his breathing at the name. The warder that waits grim and Cerberus-like before the gate of betrayal in every New Englander had closed it fast and barred it staunchly against all possible invasion of discovery.

Mercy laughed with him indulgently and they fell to discourse somewhat gravely as the buoyant Faith exchanged a little war of sentimental banter with a fatherly member of the Council, who made jocose inquiries about an absent swain.

Roger had the reputation of being devoid of the humour that seasoned the more lifeless intercourse of Puritan circles. Its horse play, its bald allusions, its eternal repetitions, had but a stale flavour for him. His own irony was keener, his humour

subtler and more dramatic. More than once he had paid the price of a dry characterization, an iconoclasm of portrayal too successful to be allowed to pass unnoticed.

If the Little Maid observed the two whose talk seemed so gravely intimate she showed it by no glance in their direction and the puzzled look did not rest again, even fleetingly, on Roger's face.

Madam Chanterell relaxed her vigilance. Madam Verring grew more content, Surely there were plenty of young people of his own kind for her son to seek. Why should she fear he would waste himself on this ward of a disagreeable stranger—Roger, with his sensitive pride! Who was this Madam with her rudely obvious hatred of her new home? True, the girl bore little resemblance to her guardian; and her manner—no doubt it was modest enough now, but without a timidity befitting a maid who might listen to such discourse as the Lieutenant-Governor's. Sir William had friends of too many sorts—and there was too much profusion in the gold broideries of his doublet!

Earlier she had conceived a distaste for the ingenuous outspokenness of Faith and Mercy Apthorpe, detecting in it the blither freedom of their New York upbringing, but now she held to the thought of them with comfort.

"I am glad to see, Roger Verring, that thou hast not yet fallen into the evil ways of thy elders and set a pyramid of false hair upon thy head." The voice was rotund and sonorous, and the table looked up.

Roger felt himself grow hot as the eyes of Sir

Humphrey impaled him with sudden amusement. He saw the cavalier cast a look full of mirth at Madam Chanterell—though his own gaze rested directly on the plump figure of Judge Sewall, whose full face laughed above his double chin as he wagged his great head reproachfully at the Governor.

"I fear 'tis rather the desire to please my father than any inner conviction that deprives me of a wig," Roger answered, smiling in a swift glance up and down the board where the wigless were almost as numerous as the bewigged.

"Thou hast a sensible father. It doth greatly irk me that I cannot persuade more men to be of the same mind and cease the decking out of their persons with dead men's hair." The Judge returned to his pasty and ate with relish despite the ineffectualness of his ministrations in the matter of wigs.

"'Tis all very well for Roger! An' I had his hair I'd not cover it, but 'tis my belief our Justice would better adorn the bench in dead men's hair than in no hair at all!" and the member of the Council shook his powdered periwig with sober conviction.

Judge Sewall again deserted his trencher, knife and fork suspended, to join in the merriment, putting up a deprecatory hand to the scanty fringe about his smooth face.

The talk fell close again, the group of elders around the Governor sinking their tones to a mysteriousness almost painful, a mysteriousness that spread to include the discourse of the younger people near Mistress Armitage.

"And may it not be, Sir, that the accusers be sometimes themselves false or mistaken?" The voice for which Roger was listening reached him with gentle distinctness.

The words were addressed to Mr. Saltonstall but the answer came with prompt severity from Mr. Cotton Mather.

" 'Tis a matter, Mistress, where maids and women would best have no opinion."

"Nay, Sir, but are there not maids among the accusers? How should we not think of it when women are hanged for it?" The girl spoke deprecatingly, with modest questioning, but there was earnest in the quiet of her tones.

"You touch on that concerneth those whose age and sex enableth them to judge," was the stern reply.

"Yea, Mistress," echoed Sir Humphrey, "listen to us graybeards an' you would be enlightened. 'Tis a grave matter for the young."

Mr. Increase Mather fixed a suspicious gaze upon the stranger. His son Cotton's twenty-nine years gave to him a look scarcely older than the simulated youth of Sir Humphrey. The girl regarded the Puritan ministers seriously. Her eyes had again the mournful intentness Roger so well remembered. Mr. Cotton Mather was going on, his face warming with excitement.

"To doubt the afflicted, to speak tenderly of the malignants—'tis a dangerous course." His words vibrated with angry warning.

"Aye, Mistress," put in Sir Humphrey Wildglass again, " 'tis ever dangerous to question."

Increase Mather frowned a little, but the look with which Sir Humphrey encountered his cold scrutiny allayed his suspicion.

"Even as this comfit is crushed in the teeth," the son continued, "and is torn and vanisheth, even so shall the malignants perish by the hand of the Lord."

"The teeth would seem to find rare enjoyment in the crushing," Sir Humphrey remarked below his breath.

"They shall be devoured, and in their place new strength shall be in Zion. Beware, Mistress——" He fixed his eyes balefully on Temple, leaning a little forward in his place—"Beware lest bewailing the emissaries of the Devil you yourself fall into the snare!"

"Even so, Mistress," struck in the cavalier once more with unmoved solemnity. "Beware—to have wits is to give black inducement to the Devil."

The interruption was again ignored and the voice went on in shriller denunciation.

"He that withholdeth from the conflict—*cursed shall he be.*"

The silence that followed was full of shrinking terror, fear of the supernatural weighting the air. Then talk broke out again more feverishly, each speaker recounting some new tale of the manifestations in hag-ridden Salem, till faces grew clouded and distrustful like the faces of those who strain their sight within a fog.

The girl's look was still fixed upon the hectic cheeks, the prominent eyes, the full and tremulous lips of Mr. Cotton Mather.

"You mistake Mistress Armitage, Sir," put in Nathaniel Saltonstall. "She bewaileth not the minions of Satan; she but asked for guidance in knowing them. 'Tis sure were the Arch Fiend to appear in the guise of an accuser he could do monstrous evil among the good."

Lady Phips had risen. Mr. Mather's answer was somewhat lost in a setting back of chairs and a silken rustle of departure. But his expression was amply eloquent. He was not wont to be answered or even appealed to save as Oracle. That an unfrocked layman, that a woman, worst of all, that a maid, should question him as an equal with no more deference than is paid to age and station, shocked alike the importance of the man and the convictions of the priest.

"No more of witches!" commanded the Governor. "Here Johonnot, fill the glasses. 'Tis Burgundy, my good sirs, as old as Mother Carey. Think on more cheerful themes."

Conversation brightened with the stir, grew business like and fell upon the currency, then, at some comment of Sir Humphrey's, upon the Indians.

"New England's not safe till Canada be ours." The Governor brought down his hand heavily so that the tankards jumped, and one spilled its redness along the damask.

"Put salt on it, William," advised Judge Sewall placidly. "Thou hast been so long from home thou art not well trained in domestic deeds."

The Governor spilled the great salt cellar bodily upon the offending blot.

"So long as the red men have the French behind them we're like to have our fill of horrors," he went on. "Had we but money——"

"Aye, Sir William, 'tis money makes great deeds——" The voice of Sir Humphrey again—"'Tis perhaps at Quebec we might find the gold. What saith the valiant Captain?"

"That we'll capture Quebec, with Sir Humphrey Wildglass to show us the gold when 'tis done! 'Twould not be the first time I'd seen Sir William capture a treasure from the enemy!" Roger answered promptly, his look turning from the cavalier to the Governor as he spoke. There was nothing in the glance to reveal any hidden meaning, but the silent flash of the Governor's blue eyes as they met his own had a swift significance. Sir Humphrey, whose wandering gaze had returned sharply to the speaker at the retort concerning the Frenchman's gold, did not miss the look.

His voice, quiet, conversational, affable, had worked in Roger the quick repulsion it had effected at every pause of the evening when its cadences had reached him. Yet it was the voice of a gentleman, well-bred, interested to the point of flattery, indifferent to the point where its words could have no hint of personal feeling.

His elbow was leaned upon the table, his silver cup held suspended between thumb and forefinger as he listened. Now he sipped at the wine with pleasant absorption in its flavor while a soft sound of unspoken applause rose upon Roger's words.

"Such redoubtable hunters of treasure would be their own best guides in Quebec," he answered,

setting down the glass. "Truly, Sir William, 'tis a brave supporter you have! 'Tis pity you'd not more such in '88! Who knows——"

"It is not in the power of man to foresee tempests and to prophesy the failure of allies," broke in the member of the Council.

"Still, disaster is disaster," maintained Sir Humphrey. "To reach Quebec we need more than wampum or paper pledges, and 'tis not easy beguiling money a second time from the pockets of kings."

"Nay, and that's a truth, Sir Wildglass! No spendthrift had ever tighter fist upon his purse when good deeds are in question than your King!" The long-visaged one who had earlier set upon the Governor with harsh questioning thrust himself aggressively into the conversation. "The folly of kings is beyond all understanding of them that are wise. And the folly of a King's advisers is even less to be unriddled. I——" He paused, as if brought to a stop by a sudden intruding thought, and relapsed into taciturnity.

A flicker of pleasure crossed the polished surface of Sir Humphrey's attention. Roger, acutely aware of the man as of a crouching shadow in the forest, was relieved at his neighbour's abrupt retirement from the dangerous ground of kings' follies.

"It is not in reason," submitted Mr. Increase Mather, "that the King should furnish gold save as he is assured—under Providence—of the success of the expedition."

"The guarantee would be in the good wisdom of

its conduct," put in the Lieutenant-Governor drily.

"Or in greater peace at home perchance?" suggested Sir Humphrey. To Roger there ran beneath the indifference of the tone a note more arid, more intent. Again the voice woke a vibration deep in the submerged past.

Sir William had reddened at Mr. Stoughton's unmannerly taunt.

"It is my belief," said Nicolas Verring slowly, "that these expeditions against scattered handfuls are well-nigh waste till we can show we are superior to the French in Canada."

Gratification beamed from the Governor's angered countenance.

"Hear!" he cried. "'Tis as Mr. Verring says. Canada first—and all the Northern tribes will submit."

"But can we leave the settlers deeper in the wilderness to suffer while we wage war with France?" The question gave chance for discussion, and Sir Humphrey waited the Governor's answer, his face showing a sympathy and perplexity hard to distrust.

The Governor evaded him lightly, seeking to change by a jest a topic that led straight into the dissensions this very occasion had been meant to soften. He at least had marked the blundering—or ingenuity—by which a stranger, otherwise so tactful, had introduced themes most likely to set men by the ears.

"'Tis not always possible a man should conform practice to theory." Mr. Stoughton, consistent in

his obstinate hostility, refused the opening, and his precise utterance reached the ears of Sir Humphrey Wildglass with definite instruction in the matter whereon the questioner had wished to be informed. "The Governor projects an expedition to fortify some point of Pemaquid."

"The affair would seem of sufficient importance to England that she send one of her own generals to effect the reduction of Canada," Sir Humphrey went on as if scarce remarking the Lieutenant-Governor's reply. "'Twould let the French perceive they had to deal with more than the anger of a province."

If there was one expression more than another to fall like scalding lead upon the lately disappointed colonists it was the word *province*.

"The colony wants no better commander and no braver than Sir William Phips," answered stoutly the member of the Council.

"A toast for the Governor, our Commander—the bravest and the best!" Roger had risen impulsively, a compelling resonance in his words, his head high, leadership already strong in the virile magnetism of his look.

"Hear! Hear! Fill to the Governor!"

The contagion of a real enthusiasm, a common resentment at the idea they must needs have one from England to command them, brought every citizen to his feet, even Mr. Stoughton, most incensed of all.

In the flush of a fellow-feeling again flowing in a single current their patriotism brimmed the barriers the stranger had exposed, and each, gazing

upon his comrades, thrilled with the sure sense of their fundamental union.

"Captain Verring—— Gentlemen——" Strong emotion showed in the Governor's face and gripped upon his words so that they began with struggle, and ended with a solemnity more potent than gratitude. "May God preserve me worthy of your trust."

It welded the group to a closer fervour. Was he not their own? New England from his boyhood and no vainglorious alien from over seas!

Roger's face, alight with the purest championship, with an exultation for his hero dearer than praise for himself, caught the look of Sir Humphrey Wildglass and knew it for the look of a hypocrite, and as they lowered the empty wine-cups the man's glance crossed his own—smiling faintly with a subtle menace.

## CHAPTER XV

### "O SWEET CONTENT"

IF distrust were uppermost, another thought was dominant as Roger entered again the square parlours. It blended with the scene just past to give his bearing that force of individual distinction whose outer calm strengthens, to conceal unwonted fire.

Mercy Apthorpe was with his mother, and he joined them, meeting the subject of their talk with whimsical repudiation.

"Mercy will have it, Roger, thou hast a look like me, when the whole world knows thou'rt featured like thy father." Madam Verring spoke with a natural animation showing through the sedateness of long training.

"Roger?—Why he is the image of his father!" Lady Phips had added herself to them, drawing with her the young people by whom she was surrounded.

Mercy stubbornly shook her head.

"I leave it to the others," she insisted. "Mistress Armitage, doth not Captain Verring resemble his mother?"

Roger, with one of the impulses that were an embarrassment of foolishness to his father, out of keeping with the unadorned rigidity of a godly life, drew his mother suddenly nearer and bent his head closer to her own.

"Now," he interrupted with jesting triumph, "who dares so slander my mother answers to me!"

"'Tis true. Speak, Mistress Armitage! Is't not true?" cried Mercy eagerly. "He doth look like his mother."

"Nay"—the response came in a voice curiously disturbed but rich and wonderful with meaning—"He *is* his mother—they're but one creature."

A flush of pleasure rose in Alison Verring's cheeks. She turned to the girl, a smile ready behind the stately quiet of her wonted manner, but Roger had raised his head at the same time and she saw the glance the two interchanged, Roger's eyes full of comprehension and something more, the girl still amazed but with a confidence, almost an intimacy of gaze newly come, and behind the look the stir of the waters an angel troubles.

Madam Verring's lips came soberly together. She did not know that the look was remembrance, and the hidden agitation the shock of the meeting of past and present.

"Who speaks of likenesses?" Sir Humphrey approached from the opposite side, being always careful not to place himself too near a younger man.

His presence, like Roger's, was not to be numbered among those that pass unnoticed. The charm of one believed to know the life of the King's court, not as an outsider but as part of its intricate and doubtful complications, the charm of the world's man to the untravelled, the man of fabled experience to those of simple lives, imposed itself upon the throng.

"Mistress Apthorpe should plead guilty. 'Twas she began the theme." Temple Armitage met the cavalier with ease of cordial understanding, no ripple of discomposure left to show where the waters had been stirred.

The sensitive Mercy coloured under Sir Humphrey's look even more darkly than under Roger's. She had intuitively discovered that Roger's was not for her, but the accomplished gaze of Sir Humphrey had more personal appeal. As he addressed her she had looked from Temple to him and now she fixed her look again upon the girl.

"I think, Sir Humphrey Wildglass," she answered with a shy boldness, "that your features, save the mouth perchance, be much like those of Mistress Armitage."

Roger raised his eyes sharply. The laughter that followed hid, he thought, something startled and fugitive that crossed Sir Humphrey's face. Mercy was right. The features were like.

"My gratitude—humble and devoted—Mistress Apthorpe, and our united plea for mercy to her whom the—— Now how have I offended?" as the laughter grew.

"You use Mistress Apthorpe's name somewhat freely when you plead for *Mercy*," Roger explained in the meaningless tone of unsubstantial talk.

"How now, Mary! All the windows closed? 'Tis warm here." The Governor's discomfort brought another smile to his wife's lips.

"Sir William would have every house a ship! 'Tis his ambition to live in a draught like a gale!"

she interpreted. "I have much ado to keep the ornaments from blowing out the doors! Dost not know," she demanded of him impressively, "that moths and beetles—and mosquitoes—wait without?"

"Who careth? A man must breathe." He put his hand with a gesture of suffocation to his tight and many-folded stock. "An' you would not be a widow let us have air."

"Roger,"—Lady Phips yielded with smiling indulgence, pretending a sigh.—"Open the big hall window, wilt thou. One must pleasure the man else he'll be leaving me for another voyage."

Roger turned promptly to Mistress Armitage.

"Will you come with me and help preserve the Governor to his office? Lady Phips will put a greater faith in my performance, so."

Sir Humphrey was hardly conscious of the intention of the words before the two were gone. The impassivity of his handsome face showed an amused ripple.

"Outflanked," he murmured to himself with a smile that might have been a benediction.

The window swung easily on unjarring hinges.

For a little neither spoke. The damp air drawing gently through the lace-framed opening coaxed her hair from its confinement and ringed it in soft curling ends upon her forhead.

"You had forgotten me," he said at last. There was no reproach in the words and in her answer no denial of the bond made by the common memory.

"You were not 'Captain Verring' on the *Araby Rose.*"

He looked up apprehensively as she uttered the name of the ship but none were near enough to hear.

"Nor were you Mistress Armitage," he answered.

"Yet you knew me!"

"There could not be two of the Captain's Little Maid. Where have you been—since?"

Others had opened the door close beside them and were standing at the threshold disputing as to whether the rain had ceased. Roger's voice had sunk to the note that holds its distinctness, yet exists for none but the listener. "Perhaps I should not recall that time? 'Tis too painful——"

Her look lifted itself to his, undissembling.

"I dwell on it often," she said. "I have forgotten nothing. I had not forgotten you. But there is none to whom I can speak of it. My guardian is far away, and to Madam Chanterell—I cannot mention it." Her eyes sought the night and the shine of candles in the wet drip from tender leaves.

"I think," she went on, "Madam can hardly forgive Captain Phips for saving me since he had no woman upon the *Rose* to bear me company! As if any care for a frightened child could have been better than his own!" A little warmth of remembered displeasure had crept into her tone. There was about her a solitariness incongruous with her beauty and the devotion that seemed ready to spring up and cling to her on every hand.

"How came—— How long have you been with Madam Chanterell?" he asked.

"Hath Captain Phips not told you? But then

he hath not seen me, and my letters—they have all strangely miscarried."

He bent a little toward her from the broad window seat and spoke still lower as the more curious passed and repassed.

"Only once have I had any word of you. 'Twas in a battle. A ball ploughed up the water beneath our bow as Captain Phips—Sir William—came toward me. And I grew bold and questioned him."

"Of me?" Her eyes were gravely on his face.

"I asked, 'Is it well with the Little Maid?' and he said so I could hear above the noise, 'Yea, 'tis well. God be thanked—I believe 'tis well!' In all the years I have had no other word," he repeated.

"Was it the battle—that recalled—— Were you remembering the *Walrus?*" She still watched him, intent upon his answer.

"That—and the night when the Captain came over the side with you in his arms."

She grew paler, exalting the dark shining of her eyes.

"Tell me about it," she begged. "Save for some hateful words of—— Save for a few vague hints I never knew. But it was a tale of a hero—of that I am sure."

"It will not sadden you?"

A half mirthful gleam appeared in the earnest of her look. "I am not of those whose sensibilities cannot bear the truth," she said with a little shrug. "'Tis a sad confession of indelicacy!"

Roger's smile of understanding gave instant re-

sponse. Something he would have said hovered a moment unspoken and he grew silent.

"Tell me," she demanded again. "Nay, Madam, there is no draught—I thank you—I love the air."

But Madam Chanterell came fussily close and would have withdrawn her from the window.

"Come, Temple. Lady Phips is waiting to hear thee sing with Sir Humphrey the madrigal thou gavest my brother yesternight. The dampness will hoarsen thee."

"I fear it not," the girl answered steadily. "Is she truly waiting or will a few minutes——"

"She waits now," Madam insisted. "'Twere rude to delay, and Sir Humphrey——"

"Pray, Mistress—Sir Humphrey can wait patiently if the boon be worth the waiting," began the cavalier, but the Maid had risen.

"I shall claim Mistress Armitage when the song is ended—— If you would still hear the tale?" There was nothing unpleasantly assertive in Roger's look but it overbore the obstacle of Madam Chanterell's displeasure, making to her the announcement, leaving the decision to the girl, ignoring Sir Humphrey.

"Unless it take you from duties to other friends." She had given her hand to the cavalier.

"'Other friends'!" Roger heard Madam Chanterell exclaim. "Thou art in haste!"

To the watcher there was more pain in the harmony the two figures made than in the confidence of the man who had supplanted him. Sir Humphrey made him feel a crudeness in his youth, unsophisticated, almost boorish. With dismal facil-

ity he exaggerated the contrast, possessed only of its unkindness, callous to his own advantage.

The cavalier was dressed with the taste he might have bestowed for a royal ball, and there was in his manner a perfection that greater men had lost time in striving to attain. More glances followed Mistress Armitage enviously than she saw, as Sir Humphrey seated her at the spinet and bent above her as if to consult upon the song.

There was evidently a laughing quarrel. Roger marked it as he sought Faith Apthorpe, and stood beside her chair, feeling certain her attention would be bestowed like his own.

"She is going to sing!" the girl whispered.

Roger's face kindled and Faith's eyes held him for an instant with zealous sympathy. As she looked down, a flush, the glow of her own enthusiasm, transformed her all at once into a loveliness she had not had before.

Mistress Armitage had seen the revelatory flash in Roger's look and the girl's flush. A smile twitched at the corners of Sir Humphrey's lips.

"Let it be 'Sweet Content' as you say, Mistress," he assented amiably, "but I should have preferred the madrigal—of love." His voice, flexible to his will, held just the measure of suggestion which he dared give it.

Roger could not see that there was no consciousness in her thanks for the concession; the man's attitude was so full of a pleased possession, no onlooker could guess the ardour to be meant for the spectator rather than for the maid.

"'Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O sweet content!'"

With her voice fell silence, eager, startled, the silence of indrawn breaths. No voice like hers had ever sounded in the New England wilderness.

"'Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexéd?
O, punishment!'"

The man's tones, blending rarely, wove a fine entanglement.

"'Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexéd
To add to golden numbers golden numbers?
O sweet content! O sweet, O sweet content!'"

Judge Sewall kept time softly with his foot; his look had a fine benignity. None stirred from his place. Roger was safe to look his fill.

The girl's dress flowed about her in a magic of folds where the light of the candelabra lingered. From the fine oval of the strong and delicate face to the hem of the brocade, softer of finish than the stiff robe of the Governor's lady, she was herself a melody with the song.

As if for the first time, Roger felt the spell, the mystery! Hate and love confronted each other in his soul and their contest was an agony. Hate of this man who dared to come so near, to look—as he did look, upon her fairness. Love, love itself, for even as his senses trembled he needed nothing to show him that were another to be suddenly dowered with all the wonder of her beauty, and she to be left within that other's outer self, it would be still for her he sought, for *her*, the Little Maid.

As the song finished, there was for a moment a pause, then a sound faint, murmurous, in the beginning, but rising to a very clamour of delight and pleading.

"Another. 'Twould be cruel to refuse." Lady Phips had laid both hands tenderly upon the girl's bare shoulders. "Sir William asks for it," she entreated.

"You know well the plea to choose, my Lady," laughed Sir Humphrey. If the tone sneered, the manner flattered, "Shall it be the madrigal?" he asked the girl.

"Nay"—she ran her fingers in a soft prelude upon the keys—"we'll make separate choice and let them listen at their liking."

The silence fell again, perfect, unbroken. This singing was not what they knew as singing, the decorous intoning of psalms. It was a ballad of old Devon she had chosen, a parting, a weary waiting, and after despairing grief the return. The air was simple, but from the keys she woke a speaking harmony that filled the tale with its whole intent.

Nicolas Verring gave a quick heed to the words. By them, monotonously chanted, he had been swung to sleep in a hooded cradle when the colony was young. But the softening in his face was no sooner come than sternness and reprobation succeeded.

As the Maid rose, Sir Humphrey slipped into her seat, his eyes on her face as he began.

"'Bid me to live and I will live
Thy Protestant to be.'"

A shiver of shocked delight ran through the circle of Puritan maids.

If the girl had sung with an interpretation loftier than the poet's, Sir Humphrey's music was the very abandonment of the sensuous.

The room sank to a more deadly hush, the young people stealing glances of bewildered pleasure at one another, the elders set straightly in a stare.

"'Or bid me die and I will dare
E'n death to die for thee.'"

For Roger the strength of that he had tried to hold in a struggling subjection had already overcome. He was no longer his own, but Love's. To a man like Roger Verring the knowledge was a sacrament; it deepened in his face the lines of power and heightened the beauty of his unstained manhood. He was not aware of the tenseness of his gaze; all the might and fervour of a strong nature concentrated in the look and her own rose to meet it as if drawn by an unconscious prompting from within.

"'Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me,
And hast command of every part,
To live and die for thee.'"

The girl had stepped backward out of the singer's ken, but as he sang the last word Sir Humphrey moved a little in his seat and raised his glance to find her. Its graceful homage, its ripe adoration, were startled into something less devout under his suddenly lowered lids; but he would have been hard pressed to find a lack in her replies, or to discover a consciousness in voice or manner as Roger approached.

"Temple, my dear——" It was Madam Chanterell again masterfully claiming her charge. "I want thee to see the amazing cup sent by his Grace

of Albemarle and the others to Lady Phips. Sir Humphrey, have you seen——"

"'Tis extraordinary pretty." The young man who spoke had edged nearer to Mistress Armitage while the others talked. "If you will, Mistress——"

"Nay, Thomas, not so fast." Roger had come directly to her and stood waiting with perfect determination. "Mistress Armitage is pledged to me."

"Are pledges then always redeemed in this new part of the world?" jested Sir Humphrey.

"My pledges are redeemed in any part of the world," laughed the girl.

"Then are you more than mortal. One was already sure of that! For the rest of us Fate sometimes clips performance ere't be done," he answered with a laugh that challenged hers.

"My brother will soon expect us"—Madam Chanterell interposed as the girl would have gone. "I fear, Master—Master——"

"Captain Verring, Madam," The Governor genially supplied the pause. "'Tis a name also good for pledges. You'll not be long ignorant of it in Boston. 'Deed and more than once it hath been spoken at court when Mr. Mather and I had the King's ear."

Madam Chanterell looked coldly both upon the Governor and upon Roger. Sir Humphrey answered for her.

"Madam Chanterell will be the first to regret an ignorance so much her loss," he said with a look at Roger of such apparent amiability that Judge Sewall commented as the group drifted apart, "'Tis

a terrible civil fellow, though I like not his wig!"

Roger returned the look with one as imperturbably gracious.

"You place the word badly, Sir Humphrey," he corrected. "'Tis for me, not Madam Chanterell, to 'regret'."

Madam Chanterell smiled against her will, feeling again the unwelcome sense of his attraction.

Alison Verring, who had regarded the little war of wills from near at hand, felt a thrill of pleasure as Roger and the Maid moved down the room, but the pride was small balm to the stronger disapproval and the sharper pain of loss with which she followed her son.

The songs had offended her morbid reticence. That a maid should sing of love, and with expression, argued that she had thought of it, and to own to thoughts which in her girlhood she had counted enemies and striven with prayer to conquer seemed to her unmaidenly and bold. The power to interpret was a thing apart from her Puritan ideals, a sin of mummery and unpleasing in the sight of God.

Nicolas Verring felt no pride. The whole race and kind which this girl and her friends represented were to him anathema, cursed of Heaven and cast out from the strenuous companionship of them who sought salvation, their every charm lent by the Devil for unhallowed ends. He observed his son grimly as the two paused before the cabinet. Without the mother's prescience he yet suffered.

The cup, massive and delicately graved, glowed richly within the ebony walls.

"'Tis like himself—pure gold," the girl exclaimed. "Was Lady Phips not well pleased? But 'tis certain she was. A husband so honest, so honoured——"

"Lady Phips was chiefly surprised to find honesty held a virtue worthy of knighthood, and such gifts!" Roger answered. "Shall I take it out for you?"

"We must not tarry for the cup: I may have no other opportunity for the hearing of the tale." Her manner grew somewhat constrained.

Roger became silent, feeling the shade upon her mood. But the girl came forth from her brief abstraction smiling.

"The New England maids are very lovely," she said as they passed Faith Apthorpe. "I should like much to know Mistress Apthorpe and her sister."

"And Mistress Faith is so much of the same mind she hath no other topic to her discourse. She talked of naught but you, both at dinner and as you sang."

"As I sang?" The girl interrupted as if recalling something.

"Aye. She hath you in a very ecstasy of admiration."

"Because she doth not know me; 'tis a young maid's way," she made answer with an indulgence so matronly wise she seemed but doubly girlish for its kindly humour.

Roger had found for them the only possible isolation, a corner left vacant behind the Lieutenant-Governor and a small party of his own sort, who

exhibited a tendency to separate from the throng mixed but not combined by the warmth of the Governor's hospitality. They turned curious eyes upon the absorption of the two.

"The Captain, Sir William—says I owe nothing to him, but all to you. He hath told me how you remembered—even wounded——"

Roger broke in with swift denial.

"'Twas he alone saved you. But Maccartey should be here. You remember Maccartey?"

"The mate?" She was speaking more eagerly, more like the Little Maid who had told her story in the Captain's cabin.

Roger had a theme he loved and in the tale he was at once and wholly himself. Men of a more artificial mould were wont to show their better truth to Temple Armitage, what there was of the genuine left in them rousing and reanimating itself to meet the clear honesty of her. Rarely even in his earliest memories had Roger been free to be himself, but now he spoke out, undisguised, unashamed, conscious of no quarrel with expression save that it lacked the measure of its attempt.

The movement about them, shifting in the changes of an event whose like for stateliness and true simplicity no other city of the world could have shown, was quite forgotten.

The *Walrus* plunging upon the rocks, the straining of the rescuers toward the drifting ship, the terror of the men who waited in the boat, the whole scene, wrapped in gloom and loud with the sound of winds and breakers, was more actual than the men and women who went and came in the panorama of the set and ordered room.

The lowered voice, the frequent interruption in the gayer tones of others, the lapsing again into the intimacy of a shared and secret remembrance, gave to the story a double effect. If Temple Armitage had felt any surprise at the self-possession with which he had taken her from the very teeth of her warders, she might have felt an even deeper amazement as his Puritan reserve melted into the eloquence of his words.

"So he brought you—in his arms—and as he lifted you above the bulwarks, the light of the *Walrus* burning high in the dark fell across the *Araby Rose*—and you opened your eyes——"

He stopped there, his look completing what the silence lacked. He could have looked no otherwise upon the rescued child. She trembled and in her eyes, mournful and sweet as then, there rose a mist of tears.

He moved a little, involuntarily, to shelter her from those who walked without upon the porch.

"My aunt—my guardian—never knew." The girl waited a minute, her hands together, the fingers intertwining in the clinging fashion of helpless pain he remembered. Old tenderness renewed wrought at his heart grown to naught but a measure for her grief.

"It killed her," the Maid went on. "The plantation is sold and Mr. Amory—he has travelled much since then. He would not have me with him —for my sake. But what cared I for danger—to being alone—to——" She paused abruptly. That is why even my name is changed—for safety. He wished it. The names were of her family—Aunt

Lotta's—Armitage and Temple. For myself I would bear my true title before all the world and be Frances Bellingham as I should!"

"It is needful. Who knows——" Roger began, but she interrupted.

"In less than a year I shall be of age. Then I shall be myself—and then my uncle hath promised he will come for me."

"And your cousin? Know you——"

"In London a few months since. I have not seen him. He hath not even tried to prove my death. My Uncle Amory approved my coming here. He harpeth ever on my safety, and Boston is far from London."

Roger raised his eyes to discover a gaze fixed so intently upon the Maid it appeared to read her lips. It was withdrawn even as he looked but cold distrust settled upon his heart as Sir Humphrey passed on.

"Poor Madam Chanterell," the girl was saying softly. "She will not leave her brother though she hates the provinces with a hatred like no other. 'Tis well-nigh amusing, yet piteous, too, since 'tis affection brings her here. And 'twill be worse out of the town."

"Out of the town! You——"

"Go to Andover, a village northward. Sir John Winchcombe, who is ever keen upon some new scheme, hath purchased there a goodly farm; an' the Indians devour us not, we linger till the autumn."

"'Tis not safe, believe me," Roger protested. "'Tis no place for women. Urge Madam Chan-

terell she should abide here. The Nipmucks be showing their teeth in all these northerly borders. Surely Sir John Winchcombe cannot have knowledge——"

"He is of those who fear nothing their eyes have not beheld! 'All that the provinces need,' saith Sir Humphrey Wildglass, 'is men.' 'Tis Sir Humphrey has clinched the whole matter. He laughs the danger to open scorn."

"What can Sir Humphrey know? I thought him but late from London!" Roger's face was dark with more than mere anxiety. "There is no worthy courage in tempting the savages to war with women. None who had seen a woman in their hands would laugh at mention of them. I would I might be near," he ended impetuously.

"To see the evil prophecy fulfilled!" Her face, grown somewhat cold at his first words, smiled at the wish.

She spoke further in a confidence that bore a certain truth behind the smiling.

"Shall I tell you that which I fear more than wolves, or bears, or red men? *'Tis the solitude.*"

Unceasing in the long hours of long days and nights to follow, the words resaid themselves in Roger's thoughts, and the smile, behind whose surface jest he saw the loneliness, dwelt with him, a sadder presence than his fears.

## CHAPTER XVI

### AT THE SIGN OF THE ORANGE TREE

THE Orange Tree Inn was darkened and sealed against the flies. All save one corner, where the windows of its "best chamber" were wide open, to the scandal of the landlord and the distress of such housewives as passed that way.

Within, Sir Humphrey Wildglass had wrought busily all the morning. In a strangled heap upon the floor was flung a patch-worked cover; on the pine surface exposed above the walnut table legs the leaves of a considerable manuscript accumulated fast. Nothing in the room was in order save this manuscript and the figure, freed from waistcoat and doublet, that bent above the table. White lawn was rolled back above the elbows and the folds, sheer and fine, from the looms of Dutch weavers, bloused themselves in wrinkles upon the straight back.

Below the fluttered canopy of the bed lay wig and sword; over chair and stool straggled a miscellany of masculine fripperies, long silken hose stretching like tentacles from central convolutions of brocade and lustrous cloth, blue satin and silver lace.

The door was locked and only the August sun peered at the gray patches mixed in the blackness of the man's hair and at the hard, perfidious strength lined openly in his handsome face.

"'Dearlie Beloved,'" began the first letter, "'Whereas the Scripture moveth us in sundrie places to aknoledg and confess' the 'manifold sins' —of others—and whereas it seemeth oure own may bee somewhat more manifolded than att ve fyrste wee thought—I mak my honest confecion devoutlie—smilyinge, since ye Pilgrimage fareth wel. And soe hearken!

"In ye begin^ng I was but dewbius, seeing 'twas no grate summe ye forrainers will paye. However that affaire mendeth.

"And now—dearlie beloved—cometh ye better parte. The Lamb wch thou mayst remembr was loste to the House of Bellingham *hath been found* and the Shepherd wil, *Diabolo volente*, brynge it home in hys armes (or at ye beste its Fleece in hys pouch)!

"It was ye nyghte of ye arrival of Phips—wel-fed and noblie harnessd—yt first I spied out this Loste One! Culdst see the Lamb wuldst ne'er give thy consente to the sinnynge—'Tis the fairest of al flocks in severall continents—and the worser Horne of this Dilemma (even to mee) looketh not soe ill! Namelie to tak the Lamb untoe my Bosom and Cherishe it—Fleece and al—as mine Own. To this ende I mak a leisurlie progresse, fearynge nought amongst these villainous clods save an it bee needful to dispose of one lustie yonge Captain of militia who casteth greedie lookes upon my Eweling.

"The present warder of the Fleece regardeth me with an unctuous, approving eye—(and the Puritane youthe with a sillie disdaine). For the Lamb —'twil bleat but coylie for the practiced Shepherd.

"Soe seest thou there bee more than one turning in thys Lane of Povertie wherein wee stumble. Either wil suit—Moste excellentlie the waye of success *with Fredom.* For that I mad attempt the verie nighte of my discoverie, fortune favr$^{ng}$ and the Lamb straye$^{ng}$ in solitarie places. But there was base interruption—(An I fynde *whose*, there maye be neede of more confessynge!)

"But Fortune failed mee not wholly. I had mad diligent inquiries and was prepared to kill or woo, as myghte bee!" [This last sentence was carefully blotted out and could be barely guessed.] "At some expense of breth I hasted to my lodgings and fillynge in one of y$^{e}$ blankes in yo$^{r}$ goode letters presented it with my humble personne to Sir John W——, hym y$^{t}$ was concerned in y$^{e}$ compagnie of hys cousin (y$^{e}$ Duke of A——) in the matter of the tresor. 'Tis hee and hys sistre doe garde y$^{e}$ lamb.

"Ere the Strayed One returned I was wooing the Sirens with the Viol of Sir John. ('Tis a wonder—doubtless the worke of some Italian—the upper notes being as pew$^{r}$ as bee the lowest.)

"Att y$^{e}$ present my planne goeth thus. The nobel salvages of thes uncuth Wildes mak (for a price) y$^{e}$ moste trustie wolfs for the devourynge of any wander$^{g}$ Lamb whose Fleece be coveted more than its Bleatynge. 'Tis alredie sett in mocion by means of the forrainers who are bounden to pleasure mee.

"None knoweth me here. Thy cunynge letters have been swallow$^{d}$ intoe the gaping mawes of al Bostoun, and I goe in and out much honored as one high in confidence att y$^{e}$ Courte! (Imbeciles!

Cochons! Fools! Were that but a veritie—as once it was ere my starr waned—think they y^t^ I wld spende an houre among such-like purblind yokels. Faugh! Canting Swine that walloe in a pius treason whereof I shal have certaine proofs to laye before the august Paire at Whitehall—and mak my peace therewith. *Be diligent.* Mind thou singst my praises wel in quarters wee wot of.

"With the moneys of the forrainers added to thine own I mak a faire appearance though I wuld I hadd again my faytheful knave to uncrease me my garments! As 'tis, I sett the Mode for everie wuld-bee Buck of this Pharisaik Town. For the moste—they bee a lugubrius sett. (Thir Foodes bee excellente and of good drynkynge no lacke.)

"Trulie this business of Monsieur doth sour upon my stomak—However, better a soure stomak than an emptie.

"Heigho—dearlie beloved—the Lamb is *faire.* Nexte to myselfe I culd love it. Of a truth *one waye is beste.* Mark thou, 'twill bee no bungler this tyme.

"Most Timorous! Trust to thy Gregory who waits not on fortune but is hys own Fortune, and soe farewell.

"Postscriptum. This goeth by the hande of B. *Hee dare not faile us* even shuld hee rede the whole, w^ch^ hee cannot doe or I misreckon hys lernynge. Yett for precaucion marke if the thred drawne through the inn^r^ fold tear upon the pap^r^ as thou openest. (And y^e^ thred I putt where only thou culd misse it) and maye the man y^t^ plaies us false bee boiled in hel eternallie."

The second letter was in French.

"Monsieur:

"As to the affair of the *merchandise*. It were better destroyed with all convenient speed. It lieth at this present in the house of Sir John Winchcombe in the township of Andover, between the Shawsheen river and a mound or ridge that stretcheth parallel.

"The place is but feebly defended. Send those who may overcome a dozen. It will suffice. There is but *one thing* essential—*to make an end of the merchandise* we have mentioned, but if it be needful to that end to captivate all of the indwellers, see to it that none evade, remembering that prisoners are but weariness and expense to the captivators, which weariness your allies *will best know how briefly to avoid.*

"Let Assoango conduct the party—I pray. I purpose to add myself to the garrison and shall therefore be at hand to indicate the convenient moment, the which I will explain to him when I give him this letter.

"Make no mention of *others* in the matter lest by so doing you put a period to their power to serve you.

"Forward, if you please, the cipher enclosed, with all speed, to Montreal. It is news of a projected expedition. There is within the Council some hostile movement stirring. I send further advices concerning it, by N—— to the region above Pemaquid. He hath hope of finding Pére Sebastien at the place you designate. (It seemeth likely but a false alarm, the whole country here being given

over to great panic, and every man busied upon a devil-hunt among his neighbours, so that there's more talk of witches than of war.)

"In the matter of my remittances I would have somewhat more of faithfulness in time, and a more careful secrecy observed. These be not regions where messengers may not be robbed, and by those in power.

"Fail me not in the matter of the *merchandise.*"

He addressed this letter first:

"Monsieur le Capitaine le V——,
Par la main d'Assoango."

Then he set himself to the task of inserting the thread in the larger packet, folding it with great care and printing the address:

"Master John,
Abiding with Caleb Golworthy,
The Sword and Mitre,
Malbone Rd, Hartingwell."

The smell of burning wax floated from the open windows, and the clerkly toil well over, the writer stretched comfortably in his chair, whereupon he twisted his boots in the table "carpet" and swore.

His face ready to as many changes of expression as may be compassed by a good actor, relaxed after the brief irritation, to a sneering triumph. The sun had crept far enough to beat hardily upon him, and he rose, whistling loudly as he cleared the room of all traces of his late employment.

When the landlord's knock sounded he had ad-

justed his wig and was trolling with a vast good humour in the sound:

"'Pack clouds away, and welcome day,
With night we banish sorrow——'"

The landlord knocked again.

"'Bird prune thy wing, nightingale sing,
To give my love good-morrow!'"

carolled Sir Humphrey, yawning prodigiously between phrases as he unbarred the door.

"Hey—Goodman Bolt, 'tis a sad dog of an idler thou entertainest. Here have I slept away the livelong morning upon that bed! Hot water, and cold, and briskly, worthy sir, to get the drowsiness from my eyes."

The goodman cast a doubtful glance upon the rumpled couch and the litter of fine clothes.

"The flies be thick," he remarked glumly.

"Aye, and thy skull thicker! Spare thy commenting. Make haste."

The landlord stood erect in the doorway. An angry redness spread upon his sallow skin.

"Them that turn night into day and day into night," he intoned, "may well forget gentle manners in the perverting of nature. Thou wert not in thy bed before midnight and so thy day is gone to waste, whereof each moment shall be required of thee. The slave will fetch thy hot water and thy cold. And if it pleasure thee to remain longer beneath the roof of Simon Bolt, see to't thou put more check upon a godless tongue. The Inn of the Orange Tree was ever of a decent repute."

"A halt—a halt, good Prater!" cried Sir Humphrey and he smiled amiably upon his host. "'Tis

my solemn resolve to take pattern by thee and go to slumber with the fowls—albeit 'tis they that 'slepen al the nighte with open eye.'—Bring me or send me a well-brewed posset and the goodwife's cakes. I'll drink to my intention! By the Rood," he continued as the door closed on the retreating landlord, "an' I'd not a use for thee and thy roof of 'good repute', I'd soon silence thee, Simon Bolt! Wait—till Gregory Bellingham be free—— See if he give not each knavish driveller amongst ye something to twist his ugly visage!"

But the old slave woman who brought the water met a look of gentle condescension, and shuffled away rejoicing, her hand clasped tight, like the hot palm of a child, upon the coin he gave.

## CHAPTER XVII

### MUDDY RIVER WOODS: A MESSENGER AND A MEETING

AT the sign of the Orange Tree the windows of the "best chamber" were closed and no lodger was within.

Where earlier in the day Sir Humphrey's letters had been written in the midst of unseemly confusion the softened light found now a decorous room. Goodwife Bolt had begged the key and set the place in order, folding the taffety and brocade with careful fingers, and driving out the flies with strips of paper nailed upon long sticks.

Then she had shut the windows and sped apace for sympathy to Mistress Munch across the way.

Roger, pausing upon his mother's errand to the Dame, delivered it where both were seated in the close air of the shuttered house. Beulah came forth with him as he went. Her eyes were restless and underneath the primness of her speech a hurrying eagerness was plain, as if she cast about her for some expedient.

She reached the gate first and rested her bare round arms upon the topmost rail, talking as if unconscious that she blocked the way. Roger's look went beyond her and she knew where it stopped—upon the house of the Widow Pullen in which for a brief space the Maid had dwelt. The colour in Beulah's cheeks, faint as the flush of a pale sweet pea, grew more pink.

Shubael had stolen after and Roger lifted him and set him in the circle of his arm, upon the fence. The child looked shyly upward, half fearful of a sudden tumble, some rough joke to which he was inured, but Roger held him fast. And the boy, viewing the world from unaccustomed altitudes, fell solemn in surprised content.

"'Tis said the Nipmucks be out—northward," volunteered the girl, drawing Roger's attention more surely to herself.

The sentence had greater effect than she had meant. He involuntarily tightened the arm that held Shubael and the little fellow leaned upon the man's shoulder with round eyes fixed peacefully on the sky.

"To northward, did you say?"

"Yes; upon the Merrimac, I think. At least there is a rumour——"

"Whence came it to you?"

"Nausnummin, the Indian preacher, told it."

The statement had no foundation save in a chance word of Christopher Munch, who saw ever upon the darker side, but Beulah made good speed to support it, pleased with the interest it roused.

While they still spoke of Indians, Shubael put out his hand, feeling for the arm that held him, and begged.

"Stay here: stay here a little while," he pleaded.

"Yes, Roger, come in and sit." Beulah glanced up in coquettish appeal.

"I cannot—not this evening. I am in some haste—thank you," Roger answered, setting the child upon the ground.

She released the gate, moving suddenly from the path.

They shook hands in the fashion of the town and the young man raised his hat as the gate swung after him.

"Good-night, Beulah," he said pleasantly and was gone.

The girl's colour darkened to scarlet. Her eyes showed too roundly prominent, and the thin lips that could curve and tremble with weak ease in a play of sentiment, drew to a tight line.

The unconscious gentleness of the arm about the boy (privileged to cling where her imaginings had often dreamed herself) had gotten a cruel hold of her. In a trice, too, she had unriddled his interest in the Indians.

"Whither, Shubael, went Sir John Winchcombe and his family?" she asked.

"To Andover, Mam said," answered the lad, "Mistress Armitage hath promised me a letter."

"I shall tear it if it come," his sister snapped, the small teeth barely showing behind the tightened lips.

Roger heard the child's crying, as he took his way across the Common. He had seized the excuse of the errand to escape from confining walls. Despite his best efforts, a coldness daily more cold remained between him and his home. His father stern, his mother wistful, with the look of watchers who fear disaster, a look more dreadful than reproach.

The pain of it, the pressure of suspicion, was intolerable. Yet his grief at the estrangement was pricked with thorns of sharp compunction as he

realized that from it he had a refuge, a warmth no coldness chilled, itself a pain more blessed than all peace.

Out of the atmosphere of strain where the very tension of his own mood made silence under his father's reproofs increasingly in danger of furious break, he escaped whenever it was possible. More than one night had found him wandering through all its hours—to come back with the dawn, the old sense of guilt dogging at his heels.

The twilight lingered late. The August moon was low in the east before the afterglow was faded. Few people were in Tra-mountain street, and those that were abroad hastened about their business as if conscious of the hour.

Frog lane was empty. The chorus from the pond upon the Common croaked in inspiriting fugue, the patriarchs booming beneath the shriller rejoicings of the young. Soft breathings in the bushes told where a strayed cow still browsed and wandered. Roger moved onward without pause, far out beyond the settled borders of his home, into woods through which the road wound roughly toward the village of Muddy River.

Shadows lay thickly in the way. When at last he halted and took count of his position he was deep within the forest. After he turned, his step grew slower and the homeward path was travelled with less speed.

At the end of the first mile retraversed he came to a pause, thinking he heard voices. He stood in the darkness made by a great maple that roofed the rude way with a compact mass of straight-

grown boughs. His light tread had made no sound upon the bed of needles underneath.

At the instant of his pause two figures silhouetted themselves upon a strip of sky far down the path. They also were at a stand and one was beckoning the other after it into heavier shade. Roger's sight, keen and used now to the dusk, saw that the one who had bethought him of the shadow was an Indian.

He seemed to be speaking and at his words the other turned abruptly to look in Roger's direction then faced quickly about, taking the way townward. If they desired to be secret, the red man might have warned him of Roger's passing and of a probable return. In the movement of departure the Indian had held out something which the other had seized in going, thrusting it apparently into his doublet.

Roger would have moved on but the savage came directly toward him, and he stepped instead upon the other side of the great maple that interposed its trunk between them as the Indian passed. A gleam of light dropping through a broken space in the boughs touched the face; it was not a face from one of the friendly tribes, but wore the look of the French Indians of the North.

Roused from himself to quick conjecture, he followed, still slowly, the homeward path till in a narrow dwindling of the way his eye was caught by a glint of white at his feet. It might have been bark from the white birch but he stooped to it and saw that it was a letter.

"Le Sieur de Wildglass." The address was

plain even in the moonstone pallor of the day's last look.

A French letter and for Sir Humphrey Wildglass. His first conjecture as to the identity of that second figure was then correct!

Sir Humphrey stopped with startled promptness as Roger called. At sight of the letter his hand went involuntarily toward the pocket of his doublet. The gesture was checked midway and converted at once into a movement to pluck from his coat a bit of brambly leaf.

"Ah—'tis the valiant Captain!" His look bantering, derisory, settled upon Roger as he flicked the leaf daintily from his fingers. "Art starting for Quebec or art already returning?"

"I but follow you, Sir Humphrey! And I bring you word of the North and I mistake not." He held out the letter, suddenly smiling, "'Twere a happy chance had it some news of that French gold we spoke of!"

"Aye, most happy!" The cavalier thrust the letter securely within his pocket, but first examined it with insulting care, making certain that the seal was unbroken.

"I think none can have seen it but myself," Roger reassured him drily.

"Where found you the billet?"

"A little back upon the path."

"A woman's secret, Captain—and so to be guarded," explained Sir Humphrey lightly. "Not over interesting or 'twould have met my eyes ere this. I have a weak aversion for the reading of reproachful epithet!"

Roger heard the apocryphal tale unabashed, watching the elusive play of expression, as the man resumed his way, neither inviting nor discouraging companionship.

There was no branching of the path and it was already too dark to seek the isolation of the thicket. Roger swung again into the step with which he had overtaken the other and would have passed him but Sir Humphrey slightly quickened his pace.

"If thou'rt a Puritan, my good Captain Verring, then King Charles never lost his head," he sighed irrelevantly. "Thou'rt a *lusus naturæ*, being a Puritan and yet no Puritan."

"And you're no riddle easy for the solving," Roger retorted, "being Sir Humphrey Wildglass and yet—fond of the simple dalliance of the woods; 'tis not expected of a courtier."

"Truth, thou hast it, young Sir—the strolling at twilight with solitude or country folk for sole companions would suit ill the rout of fashion! 'Twould shock them dolefully in London to know 'twas tamely safe to wander here at even in the woods. Bears and wolves are the least foes they conjure up!"

"They are the least we encounter." Roger had fallen into the other's step, slackening his own.

Sir Humphrey gave him a swift side glance.

"Better wolves, I venture, than Indians? Yet surely the salvages come not so near Boston as to give uneasiness to our Captain!" The apparent astonishment of the jeer moved Roger to admiration.

"Not often, not them that are hostile," he an-

swered indifferently, fancying he detected relief in his companion's voice as Sir Humphrey went on.

"And how about the road to this village of Andover? I am setting out thither on the morrow—with no better convoy than two slaves for the fields and one Bozoun Plimly, a tim'rous provincial who recommendeth me ammunition in plenty."

"I think *you* will be safe." Roger spoke with an air of encouragement as ingenuous as the cavalier's. "I but hope you will be able to defend poor Plimly as well."

Again the side glance sought his face cunningly. Bozoun Plimly was known as of the doughty fighters.

"Hast a pretty wit, my Captain. Art dolefully wasted on this pious Boston. Wouldst send a message to Mistress Armitage? I bear a sheaf from another youth called Munch."

"I would not so burden you. His must be heavy," Roger returned calmly. "Keep your eye upon the branches above the path. Now and then they bear a wildcat."

Sir Humphrey paused, casting a look upward into the dusk of the boughs, then moved again nonchalantly forward.

"I were safer trusting to eyes wilderness-trained. Darkness is to me as daylight to the owl. An' there were no catamounts what a place for a stroll with the damosel chosen of the heart!"

He hummed a stanza from a French chanson in a happy abandonment to the hour. His voice, subdued, dipped and soared mellifluously, and his next words held a double sting.

"I wonder if there be catamounts in Andover!"

"'Tis a poor place for twilight strolling and not safe even in the day. The eyes of the Pequots are not owl-like." Roger's tones were matter-of-fact and full of warning. The stab of the man's words was deep, but it should bleed inwardly. Yet the slash of knives must hurt and the leap of flames sear and burn. Sir Humphrey was content. He was playing but lightly the prelude of his plot. If its later complications had place for the suppression of this ubiquitous Captain of militia so much the better.

Meantime the two paced leisurely on in the cloistral gloom of oak and maple, beech and pine; and the soft cheeping of birds, settled drowsily to rest, broke peacefully upon the early night. The almost vanished light sent dim lines of moony radiance across the path and the wind, rising, moved slow and stately among the leaves that drew rustling aside before its coming.

Its breath warmed and stirred the blood more mightily than the sting of cold. The odours of all full-growing wild things were in it, the pungent herbs, the sassafras and sweet brier, perfumes vital of New England that tells its heart out in the summer woods alive and thrilling to their last wee leaf; never lying dully to stretch and yawn within the heat; strong with vigour unrelaxed—interpretation of joy and pain and aspiration compassing the lives that move within its dim enchantment.

Wherever a clearing broke in upon the way, pale armies of the wild rose trooped to meet them, a wilderness of bud and blossom exhaling to the night

the very keenness of that pang that worked, thorn-like, deeper and deeper into Roger's heart as he thought of Andover and this knight of the Court, full-armed of graces, modulating his soft inflections for another ear.

"'Tis extravagantly lovely! A wonderful climate, this New England, with more passion than the tropics for all its devilish changes." Sir Humphrey filled his lungs with a long soft inhalation. "But the oracles be dumb—you never see it, never feel it, you clod-hopping Puritans!

'How sweet the oil—ta-rum-ta-ra,
On Aaron's beard did go,
And on his raiment down did run
His garment's hem unto.'

'Tis all there is of loveliness for you, a scurvily done doggerel to drone through the nose! 'Tis a climate to make poets——"

"Or heroes," put in Roger.

"And you make no more of it," the cavalier went on, "than the dullest oafs ever toiled at a dung heap——"

"Finds one then in London true love of woods and fields?"

"London! One finds men—men and women—in London! Ah——" Sir Humphrey broke out impatiently—"when shall I be done with this commerce with louts and fools! But patience—men who seek a treasure must have patience—eh, Captain?"

"An assurance of success is a great strengthener of patience," Roger answered quietly. "An un-

rewarded patience—after such uncongenial straits —were added soreness to the spirit!"

"'Assurance'!" A laugh malicious, full of amusement, bubbled up from Sir Humphrey's throat. "Faith then—'tis not for assurance I'm lacking! Our ways part here. Adieu, my valiant Captain. I go—to dream of Andover." His three-cornered hat was swung gracefully into the air and clapped over his heart as he bowed mockingly low, and the laugh still sounded between his lips as he turned aside into the dark.

Roger did not hasten. Unconscious dread of the home-coming, absorption in his jealous fears, dragged upon his going.

Beneath the current of emotion his mind was working in deep-sea ways to solve the mystery of Sir Humphrey's presence in Boston. Had he come in the first instance intent to capture the Little Maid? But she herself had said the man had been earlier unknown to them. A spy! It was the last depth for a gentleman, even an adventurer! And yet who else held clandestine meetings with hostile Indians for traffic in the letters of the French?

Thought contended with feeling till the two merged in a single purpose. Was not here a means to unmask the fellow? The energy of his patriotism reinforced the jealous torment.

Would the suffering have been worse had the man been worthy? He stopped, grappled by the fierceness of the thought. Action, combat with evil, would have its blessing in relief, but the fear, fear for her he loved, must now be greater.

He had paused at his own door, and he looked

about him with the watchful eyes of hunters or of pioneers, and while he looked a form took shape among the shadows, moving cautiously on the opposite side of Cross street.

Did the man heed him enough to follow? Or was his contempt unfeigned? Masked for all the world beside, why did he show his true face, evil, malicious, alone to the one who was most his enemy? There was a spur in the memory of that smiling indifference that mocked at defeat, annoyance even, from a source so insignificant.

He threw open the door and mounted to his room. Lighting a candle, he set it, flaring, upon a table, and standing between it and the windows took off his coat, unwound his cravat, then half drew the shutters and after a pause, extinguished the light.

In the darkness he dressed again and sat down behind one of the half-closed shutters, his eyes fixed upon the Old Way and the portion of Cross street the window commanded. Twice a figure seemed to stir in the lane. After an hour it came no more.

At midnight Roger descended to the room below. He stepped with care but not stealthily, despising too great caution, and as his hand was on the latch, his mother's door opened noiselessly on its hinges and, wound in soft gray, she slipped across the suddenly moonlit space to his side.

"Roger." There was all the appeal of a grieving child in the broken weariness of the voice. She looked frail in the wan light and pinched with wakeful miseries.

Roger clasped her with a quick tenderness of remorse, laying his hand upon her temple that beat feverishly against his palm.

"'Tis nothing wrong, Mother. I go secretly to the Governor to warn him of a spy."

"'Twas not that drove thee forth—from thy home. My son—I cannot let her take thee from me! Canst thou not give her up?"

She felt the start and throb the touch wakened. There was a moment's waiting.

"None would separate thee and me—none could," he answered painfully.

"Thou canst not give her up? O Roger, she comes of evil people——"

He released her sharply—then clasped her closer.

"No—no," he said, and bending leaned his head for an instant upon hers.

She slipped gently away, knowing the moment passed when either could bear without embarrassment the rare caress.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A MIDNIGHT CONFERENCE

ROGER issued by a side door seldom used. The rising moon had lighted the streets, but this side of the house was still in shadow and under the orchard trees it was dark. The wet grass tangled itself about his feet and the low branches brushed roughly against him. He went at first watchfully, with care to remain hidden; then more boldly, making his way from orchard to orchard.

He crossed beyond the church when the moon was under a cloud, and so by street and garden to the end of Green lane and to the Governor's mansion.

On the other side of the way there seemed to hide and wait a host of lurking shades. For better precaution, he returned on his steps, not once venturing into the light, and hesitated a moment on the porch at the back of the house. He had been certain of a figure ensconced opposite the entrance in the shelter of the elms.

How to proceed further, he was in doubt. The thought of giving up his design crossed his mind. But to see the Governor without delay and without betraying to the spy that the interview had taken place was imperative. Danger might be more imminent than anyone could have suspected. The French might be arming for an attack, might

be penetrating the wilderness toward the very entrance of Boston Neck. The Indians might be engaged upon some devilish plot for whose prevention not an hour must be wasted.

To wake the house with loud outcries was manifestly to warn the neighbourhood of his business. The windows of Sir William's room faced the open moonlit spaces and the prowling watcher seen or imagined by the pasture wall.

Spencer Phips, the Governor's nephew, was from home. The servants slept above in the garret story, save the slave Debby, who was ever near her mistress. Lady Phips had a quiet, forceful way of acting for herself which appealed to a kindred quality in Roger's own nature, and all that she did impressed him with a sense of fitness and of value. As he recalled the visits he had made in the "faire brick house of Green lane" there returned to him memory of a time when she had entered from the far end of the porch on which he stood and called "Debby—Debby! Art thou in thy room?" And the black woman had emerged from a door above their heads and descended the "back-stair," a kindly, sad-eyed old creature who had tried to kill herself when first she appeared in Boston, and had been saved from a public whipping for the offence by the girl who was to be Sir William's wife.

The flash of the recollection showed him his way. He was standing by the window where he had told the Little Maid the story of her rescue. Now he laid his palm with a close and gentle touch upon the sill, and moved away, shocked from reminiscence to anxious forethought by anxiety for her,

the fear that had assailed him at sight of the Indian in the woods.

He picked up a handful of gravel from the path and would have thrown it, but paused in time, dropped it upon the grass, and approached a trellis beneath the window he sought. He smiled a little grimly to himself as he climbed. The Governor was quick with hand or pistol! Should his burglarious plans miscarry——

He had small time for speculation. The trellis was strong and he ascended sailor-like and swift among the late roses. The thorns pierced smartly, lusty defenders of the flowers that crushed satiny and sweet across his lips.

The window above was open. Regular breathing came from the farther side of the room.

"Debby!" he called softly, his head quite within the curtains. "Debby!"

Someone stirred but the breathing was as before. He put out his hand and tapped sharply on a stool it encountered.

"Debby!"

"Yeh-es, Miss Mary." The voice was confused and dull.

"Debby!"

"Be yo' sick, Miss Mary?" The negress was lifting herself on the bed; it creaked as she turned.

"Debby—Debby—Wake up! Don't be afraid. 'Tis I—Roger Verring. I must see the Governor. Do you hear, Debby? Don't let anyone know that I'm come, but call the Governor. Tell him not to light his candle. 'Tis possible someone may be watching." Roger had leaned far into the window

and spoke in his natural voice, lowered but distinct. "I have something to tell the Governor. Wilt thou rouse him, Debby, and say to Lady Phips 'tis nothing to give her alarm."

Roger had feared a shriek when his voice should cease but Debby was not a common woman. Her tone when she answered was full of dignity and sense.

"Yo' stay quiet right where yo' be till I get into my clo'es, Cap'n Verrin'. Then yo' can come in the winder an' there'll be no creakin' doors downstair."

She was fumbling in a press at the head of the bed. There had been a nervous apprehension in her manner that made Roger wonder after she disappeared, whether or no she had really recognized him. He heard a muffled sound like a surprised snort from the far end of the hall and, after a pause, a tread not so noiseless as Debby's.

"A pest upon thee, lad, dragging a man from his bed at an hour like this!" The voice was humorously pitched though still clogged with sleep. "Art thou bewitched to——"

"Sh-sh!" whispered Debby warningly. "Yo' speakin' too loud, Mister William."

"Go thou and stay with thy mistress, Debby; she heareth the Pequods come for her scalp and thinketh the house afire! Sit thee down, lad—and out with it."

They were in the great upper hall. The moonlight streamed toward them from the front and gave a dim brightness even to the broad window seat where they were.

Roger spoke quickly.

"M-m-m—had suspicion of it, lad." The night-capped head nodded with emphasis. "I like not the man. Has't ever come to thee the name is not his own? Wildglass? I never heard it in the court of James nor is it familiar in that of King William. Yet this fellow—'tis plain—hath been much about King James. He gave me that by an allusion whose key I had from the Duke of Albemarle. 'Twas a dissolute set of rascals were in that story. 'Twas in my mind to write his Grace and ask which of the company had this fellow's presence. But I was ever a procrastinator with the pen. 'Tis a handsome rogue and—I like less than all his way with the Little Maid. When sails the next packet?"

"The *Serving Martha* goeth out on the morning tide."

The Governor waited a moment, thinking.

"Who commandeth the ship?"

"Maccartey."

The Governor struck his hand joyously upon his knee.

"Providence is for us, lad! Comes Maccartey to the counting-house in the morning?"

"I go to him to give my father's instructions."

"Take thou mine and this ring. 'Twill serve with his Grace better than letters. We'll know who is this Wildglass! Let him into the whole matter."

A half-hour more and Roger had descended and was returning by the orchards as he had come, in his thoughts the cheer of the Governor's warm

grasp mingling with the poignancy of his fears for the Governor's Little Maid.

As he entered his own home the tall clock covered the sound of his coming with its full-toned chime.

Did the Maid slumber—or did she wake, like him? She had feared the "solitude." And Sir Humphrey with his wit, his power to amuse, how welcome would be his breaking of that solitude! What charm would he not gain from contrast with Sir John Winchcombe and the wilds!

Before he slept, he heard the clank of the mill wheel turning in the opened sluiceway. The miller had begun his day.

## CHAPTER XIX

### INDIAN RIDGE

ROGER left the ferry and set swiftly forward upon the road, a road where ugly stumps showed aggressively above the receding earth and the ground pine and shoots of oak and maple struggled with persistent witch grass in the half-cleared trail.

He passed lightly over obstructions and as he went seemed to himself a creature of the forest. The memory of the ferry-way was with him and the still water, heavy, inert—dead when he had seen it first, thrilling again into a sentient glory, fiery in the rippling shallows, streaked far with shifting marvels of glow and motion in the deeper tides where life renewed itself with day.

As the shore gave him welcome, little by little the memory released its hold as echoes of an overture die into succeeding scenes and the green wilderness took him to itself. Wild things scattered shyly before him, or peered amazed and disconcerted from the covert, but he did not lift his gun from his shoulder nor heed them save in the vague apprehending that showed them part of the fleeting picture of the forest.

And yet the gun was his excuse for idling this day away from counting house and wharves, the launching of new ventures and the reckoning up of old, the smell of the sluggish docks and the stale reports of argosies and pine tree shillings.

"I shall see you, perhaps, when we return in the autumn," she had said, and the living wretchedness of the summer had laid hold on him as she spoke.

Since the hour when he had known she was gone, when he had found the house dark, shuttered, desolate under the June sun, Boston had become a place of death where decay was in the air and men moved as ghosts about unending tasks of idle import. The cavalier had been gone but a day, yet as the second night had waned into its later hours and Roger had gone quickly forth to meet vague glintings of the coming light, it had seemed no shorter than an eternity of discontent. Beneath his eyes had lain shadows heavier than the star-sprinkled dusk of morning.

Not once had he said to himself, even in the moment most filled with the purpose of his desire, "I will go to Andover," but now he kept straight upon the way without wavering or parley.

The woods sent up a broad, quavering haze. Squirrels scampered among the branches. When at noon he threw himself beneath a pine to rest, one came leaping downward almost to his head, shrill voiced and chattering to warn the trespasser.

Roger lay prone upon the heat-breathing earth and the waves of its summer madness flowed through him. Here in the far heart of the woods he was free. Free to dream, free to love his dreaming!

But rising through it all, chilling and embittering the whole, was the fear of his own joyance, so that he went on no longer full of the day's blessedness, but unseeing, abstracted, cut deep into his soul

with the harrowing torment of inquisitorial pain.

As the shadows wheeled on their retreat, he paused to look up at the sun, and hastily at the compass he carried in his pocket. Then he struck from the trail into the untracked wilderness and went onward with hardly less speed, crushing aside or trampling the obstacles that defied him.

The journey grew increasingly difficult and in the lowlands gnats swarmed from stagnant pools and hung cloud-wise in the simmering air. The snapdragon, enmeshed in great masses of gaudily twinkling bloom, and the deep brakes, gave signal of the ooze from which they sprung.

The Ridge lay snakelike along the valley, unread history in its accumulations of glacial stone. From the crest, wooded cleanly with pines too thick for undergrowth, Roger looked down along the "limpid Shawsheen" and in the fertile intervale his eyes discovered that for which they sought.

Upon a mound that was faintly suggestive of a promontory, being set in a bend of the river, was the house. It was roughly built of squared logs and bore an insignificant proportion to the barns within the same enclosure. The stockade was diamond shaped, an angle to the turn of the stream, with two gates set wide open and facing, one upon the river, the other toward the Ridge. Indian Ridge the settlers had named the place, a sinister suggestion in the name.

Fields of maize, set palely in the darker rim of evergreens and maples, were on the farther side. In a clearing of fallen grain a figure, that might have been Bozoun Plimly, wielded a sickle.

Hidden in the thick undergrowth at the foot of the Ridge ran a path. Roger had mounted beyond the spring to which it led, and his eyes did not find the figure till the glancing shimmer of a woman's dress showed among the bushes.

The spring trickled from the rude channel of wood into a hollowed log where a horse might drink, and was spilled in all directions upon moss and stones, leaving an iron-rusted trail wherever its spreading rills found way.

"Let me fill it for you." Roger came upon her as she stooped, speaking before he was fairly beside her lest he startle her. It was better than he had dared to dream—to find her so, unaccompanied by a hateful presence.

"You meet me always when I run away!" She had said no word of welcome but laughter rippled in her look. "I but came to have the woodland to myself with this for excuse." She held up her pitcher and waited as he took and filled it.

"And I—for the same reason, with this for my excuse." He let his eyes rest an instant on the gun he had set upright against a yellow birch that overleaned the place.

They talked—merrily—as they climbed. She breathed faster as they reached the top. The hill was steep.

Below them the river wimpled in and out among the rushes, and waterlilies drifted in the lapping eddies, pulling softly at their green cables as they felt the motion of the stream. Above, the sky was bluer than the blue of Italy, with no yellow ochre behind its clarity of tint, a clean, clear blue, not

cold like blues of autumn, but warm, fervid, the very dream and apotheosis of blue.

Into its smoothly hurrying current the river absorbed the glow, the intensity, and the green of willows and alders, the green of birches, and the dark shadow of the pines interpreted 'twixt blue and blue. No sound but the wood sounds, no stir but the thrill of the warm earth and happy trees.

She had given him to drink of her blue crock and it rested now against the fallen tree on which she sat. From beside it she had pulled the leaf of a hepatica and touched it delicately as she talked, her eyes lingering on it in a gentle ruth of their own ravishing.

Roger lay upon the slope, head upon hand, and his gaze questioned her mutely. Had she been glad to see him? The vivid light of a surprise that was not all sorrowful had surely showed itself at sight of him.

"You love the forest?" Her words were more a statement than a query, and came without relevance into the progress of their talk. "And yet they say the Puritans have no love for nature! You are, 'tis plain, not all Puritan!"

She looked down at him with the look that is neither smile nor earnest but holds every possibility of friendly chat.

"I fear I am—too little—Puritan!" He shook his head, the same suggested depth and shallows in eyes that widened as they met her own.

"To me, the birds, all animals—and flowers and trees—why 'tis my religion to love them." She rippled again with unvoiced laughter. "Think you I am the worse for loving—these?"

She plucked another leaf gently and laid the two side by side, the stems in her caressing fingers.

Roger flushed—a madness seizing him. The touch upon the leaf had touched at the same instant the centre of his life, and the whole throbbing machinery of being halted with sudden jar.

She did not understand. His look that might have told too much was on the leaves, and when he spoke she had read in the flush reproof, as she found in the words evasion.

"Surely not the worse," he had said. "Only—if the flowers could but know their own happiness—'twere fitter." His voice was not steady.

She withdrew coldly into herself.

"'Tis a poor, merchant's view of things demands response for love," she said loftily.

She had dropped the leaves in a vexed fashion and he laid his hand upon them. Something in the gesture at once impulsive and deliberate, gentle and determined, disarmed her. One could but like the hand. It was a proper, man's hand, but with a fineness added.

Roger lifted his eyes, his clasp still on the leaves in mute possession.

"I am but clumsy. 'Tis the Puritan whose tongue so stumbles upon uncouth words. But we be not all bargainers and miserly by nature. My meaning was other than my speech—— Sir Humphrey Wildglass would not so have offended!" The last had uttered itself against his will.

Her colour rose as she heard, but her answer was full of the laughter that gleamed ever across the surface of this summer mood, laughter, could Roger

but have known, she had well-nigh forgotten in the uncompanioned wilderness.

"Neither 'offended'—nor pleased! One could not be sure—if 'twas said for compliment—that it were more than the vain practice of a courtier who fears to forget his graces! Oft have I told him so!"

The acid of that "oft" bit deep. Roger had gathered the leaves up absently into his palm and a ray of sunlight sifting through the trees brought out the wines and browns streaked in their heart-shaped greenness from point to stem.

"They are beautiful," she said simply.

She bent nearer, her eyes on the sun-painted leaves, yet not unmindful of the power and depth of expression in the other face near her own. "Tell me," she asked, "why doth any one think it wrong to love them?"

He lifted his gaze from the leaves to her.

"Were I to say—it would repel you, and you would hold the thought for mine——"

"Try me. It seemeth all so petty, this turning from the dumb things and from the flowers. One would suppose 'twas the Devil created us—and all the earth!"

Roger looked at her, absorbing her presence. There was room in his mood for her alone. And for the future wherein he should—he must—win her.

But she waited the answer.

"These things that are of my father's faith I have never held so straitly as others," he began. "Yet because my father is the best man I ever knew—and my mother——" He paused.

"Your mother—— All the world must love your mother——" The girl spoke with a sharp access of feeling. "I saw her at Sir William's. She is like—she made me think of my own——"

She lifted her fingers to the chain about her neck and drew forth a small oval case. Two miniatures faced each other within. One was a woman, young, white-shouldered, fair-haired. No common artist could have caught the look, half humorous, half scornful, about the mouth, the frankness untranslatable of the eyes, eyes that even painted might have made deceit so gazed upon to waver.

The man was darker, of an un-English darkness, with colourless features, abundant in expression, unusual in intellect, high-bred and strong.

The two sprang to life vividly in the woods. Roger bent over them reverently. He had come nearer—very near.

"You—remember them?" His tone told more than he could have given in words more fluent.

The girl answered him eagerly. With an impulse contrary to a nature wise, honest, beautiful in strength, but locked in a prison of reserve on which her own seeming outspokenness turned the key, she told him of her home. Not as he would have told it with a mastery of language as native to him as it was unpractised, but in simplest sentences, broken often, and coming not as quarried from the rock but as cut from live flesh.

He said little now but let his look follow hers when he dared keep it no longer on her lips, and once as his gaze returned from the wooded knolls beyond the river he saw a figure come out of the

water gate and make its way along a path in the opposite direction.

With the prescience of those who watch for danger, he knew it for Sir Humphrey. He wondered whether the Maid had come this way to avoid the cavalier, and his heart rose at the hope.

She too had withdrawn her gaze from beyond the river.

"Your own childhood—'twas less merry it may be—but you had always your mother——"

"Not merry—scarcely merry—but not sad——" he commenced.

"Why doth the Puritan so hate the light and pleasant ways?" she repeated. "I cannot comprehend—'tis ever a repulsive thing to me!" She spoke warmly but turned to him with instant deprecation. "'Tis not that I would wrong them who see not the world as I—but the little children—'tis a cruelty to set the little ones thinking on the Devil and hating innocent flowers——"

"It is not hate they would teach the children so much as forgetfulness," answered Roger. "I would you might take my word not as mine but only as the faith of them I—respect!"

"Speak. Trust me," she begged. "Of the Puritan faith I know nothing save from its enemies."

She had raised her head, turning her face, flower-wise, to the sun. The green boughs swayed almost imperceptibly toward her.

All trace of the ascetic was gone from Roger's mood. No stern denial of his upsurging joy laid hands upon his peace.

"We may not love the flowers," he said, his voice

troubled with happiness, "because loving the visible, the carnal, we take but earthly pleasure, forgetting the Creator of all."

"False and sophistical!" she cried out. "I love ever the Creator better for it all. What needs He of our love? He would have us happy."

"'Tis not for our happiness but for His He hath created us—that we might honour Him."

"Nay—and of all vainglorious thoughts! Matters then our opinion so much to God!" She spoke scornfully. The youthful flush answered in Roger's cheeks.

"You like not my words—and you—forget I was to speak for others."

"Nay, I will remember; I will not again interrupt." She smiled. "Tell me what is't your father believeth. He hath the air of a great statesman."

"And is but a simple ship builder and merchant of Boston!" Roger laughed, reassured in the smile. "He loveth Boston."

She waited again expectantly as he halted.

"That which he believeth is not to be easily given justice by one lukewarm—who knoweth not what part of that belief may be his own by any strength of his own apprehension. Tis something like this." Roger hesitated once more. The soft loveliness of the summer afternoon contradicted what he was about to utter. His words seemed out of tune with the day, seemed to push him farther and farther outside the pale of that paradise of companionship into which he had so barely entered. He drew his hand across his eyes and looked up at her as if

pleading. A warmth generous and gracious came into her face in answer.

"Fear not I shall be womanish and angry. I would *know*," she insisted.

"The very substance and heart of it all is that each of us hath a relation—communion—with Him who hath made us, that none may interpose between the soul of each and his Creator. The whole of life is in the effort to get nearer to Himself and by apprehending a divine Will perform it more straitly. Night and day 'tis of this he thinks—the Puritan. Long nights my father kneels praying, appealing, striving, for some assurance of that nearness, which if he receive, he comes among us transcendant in the beauty of his conquest. If he receive it not, the suffering of his face 'tis death to see. 'Tis a life terrible in emotion—fierce in combat——"

"Combat?"

"Yes: with the Devil, who works ever more insidiously to make a breach in the closeness of that bond—and that is why even the flowers are feared, feared as tempting the senses to pleasure and so the soul to a relaxing of vigilance, to a dulness. 'Tis held that every soul longeth from birth for evil and is lost forever save for an election of God Himself. None may be wholly certain of that election, so my father believes; still, an' he but strive without ceasing, lifting up his thoughts to the Highest, resisting all that draweth from such contemplation, there may come to him moments of wondrous hope. Mr. Cotton Mather seeth visions. Often he lies all night upon the floor confessing his sins and wrestling with the spirit. Knowest thou Judge Sewall?"

The girl seemed unconscious of his slip upon the *thou*.

"Of a truth," she answered earnestly. "A good man by his look,—plump and portly. He hateth periwigs!" Their eyes met in a mutual twinkle that broke gratefully the soberness of their speech. The Maid's look dwelt a little abstractedly on the soft bronzed masses of Roger's hair. "What of him?" she asked.

"'Tis his custom whenever he be troubled or weighted with some anxiety to close the blinds of his upper room and there to fast and pray a day—two days—till his soul be at rest. He liveth not so strenuously as my father, being of a more comfortable build in all ways, but to him, too, there are no realities so great as the realities of the spirit."

"And thy mother?" The gentle possessive came unaware from the girl's lips as it had from Roger's. An instant brought knowledge and she retreated, taking fright at her own kindness.

Roger dared not look at her, so glowing, so deep, so self-revealing, was the delight within him. The effort of repression hardened his voice.

"My mother hath come to hold with my father, and as her flesh is weaker she suffers more and oft believeth herself to be of the lost." His tone grew tenderly indignant. "An' she be lost there is no justice in Heaven," he said abruptly, and at this, gazed at the girl as if to find sympathy where sympathy was changed to coldness.

"'Tis a hard faith," she answered, "fit only for hard men."

"Yet it hath made great men." Roger's disap-

pointment showed in a yet firmer tension of his voice. "Think only of Cromwell——"

The girl grew scarlet.

"A butcher—a murderous miscreant! And you —*you*—can honour a Cromwell!" She bit her lips. With the word he had touched on the sorest spot in her convictions. Horror of the regicide was a passion bred in her very blood. "What faith had he—but faith in himself, but love of slaughter!"

To Roger the sudden change became at once the sign of his own punishment. He had erred, exposing his half-hearted loyalty to the faith of his home! And he had said but truth in knowing she would be repelled by its actual presentment. The cavalier—he was of her world! Let her go to him! And with that thought a pang crueler than all punishment!

She would have risen and left him save that she would not resent too openly his imagined rebuke. She remembered bitterly the reputed modesty of the Puritan maids. They would not have forgotten and met a man's advance half way; yet she felt angrily that in her very unconsciousness was something nobler than in their shyness, and she resented with the intensity of one used to command a careful and distant homage what she believed to have been Roger's thought of her.

He was sitting more erect, a little removed.

"This is very beautiful—but 'tis always here. I shall be missed——"

She was going. She put out her hand in a stately fashion, and he would have helped her to rise, but as he would have sprung first to his own feet he looked beyond her and drew suddenly near.

Indecision, warrings of conscience, jealousy, were no more. There was no transition; it was another man, one she had not seen before, who spoke.

"Slip lower on the slope and run," he said quietly so that those who watched should not suspect the warning. "Indians—— There's no shelter here ——" He rose smiling, giving her his hand. "Pretend to pick the berries on the slope below."

The Ridge, open as cathedral aisles above, was skirted at its base with crowding saplings of the dogwood and wild cherry.

She rose beside him, smiling, like himself.

"Berries! Let us get some," she answered gaily, her voice untroubled as the smile, but as she stooped to gather the first, and he bent beside her (between her and the feathers he had seen peering from behind a tree) she whispered rapidly, "You will come?" and he replied, "Yes. Ready —*now*."

Light—fleet—straight as the sunshafts, she fled with him upon the path. Roger's look, the look of a man who will dare all things for the woman he knows he loves, had flamed on her without concealment in the second of their interchanged whisper. Something in its undaunted coolness, its sure energy had given her confidence. They ran swiftly and none rose to intercept them. Roger's eyes had seen the scout in the very glance that discovered their position to the savage.

Upon their track the Indian drew nearer horribly —silent, assured. What maid could outrun an Indian? He was not alone. Roger's ears, sensitive

as any Nipmuck's of them all, heard the sounds he feared. He had lifted the maid and quickened his running supernaturally. They were in sight of the stockade when he heard the first click of the trigger.

He set her quickly in the path.

"Run!" he cried. "Faster!" wheeling as he shouted.

The Indian's shot, meant for the girl, missed her for she too had wheeled finding Roger had not followed. As she turned the Indian fell.

Roger's shoulder felt the pang of the musket ball that answered. Two other savages had leaped the body of their companion and were upon him. There was no time to reload—and one unemptied barrel remained to the foe. Roger sprang for the foremost who would have slipped past in pursuit of the girl. On the Indian's head he brought down his gun with a crash. He could not stop to see where the man tumbled, nor to seize his weapon. The last of the three had raised his own musket. Roger tore it from him with a wrench that dropped the injured arm helpless and swinging.

The satisfied fury of a snake trodden on by a bare foot gleamed in the Nipmuck's eyes. With a leap he grappled his crippled enemy, drawing a knife as they wrestled. The uninjured arm was busy warding off the grasp. The knife caught the sunlight bewilderingly on its short blade. Blood was dripping from Roger's sleeve.

Then the Nipmuck's wrist was clutched from behind, the girl's fingers sunk into the bare flesh of the savage with a force desperate enough to give sur-

prise. The mere instant wherein the Indian wavered sufficed. Before he had recovered that second's pause he was down, his knife wet to the hilt in his own blood.

As they gained the stockade an arrow sped from a bush pierced the Maid's sleeve.

## CHAPTER XX

### "FOES WITHIN"

ROGER dragged forward the gate and thrust it close, dropping the bars before he spoke. Plimly, his muscles swollen with running, at the same moment shut and barred the river gate through which he entered. The household, dazed or voluble with questions, hurrying to meet them, hung about the Maid.

Sir Humphrey's face was whiter than its wont. It showed a slight tremor of agitation beneath the delicately managed rouge. It was fitting, the anxiety, but Roger, keyed to preternatural comprehension, had seen the start, the angry disappointment with which his own presence had been recognized. He recalled the figure disappearing into the forest an hour before and, as lightning reveals a cloud-wrapped landscape there came to him the face of the Indian seen at twilight in the Muddy River woods. It was he who had been the second of their foes to fall.

Sir Humphrey had plucked the arrow from the girl's sleeve, and when she would have grasped it, held it solicitously out of her reach.

"Do not touch it," he warned her. "It may be poisoned."

The girl had recovered her breath and was telling in few words that which had befallen. Madam Chanterell's reproaches at her straying rose above the chorus of frightened exclamation.

"Thou dost not find strolling so successful hereaway, my Captain!" The malicious voice was in Roger's ears as the cavalier drew near under pretence of helping to sink the last bar in its socket. "Couldst thou not remember thy own wisdom anent the woods of Andover?"

Roger paid no heed to the taunting murmur. Bozoun Plimly had joined him and they conferred swiftly, Bozoun sending the terrified dependants about the tasks most needful, quelling their outcries with ready new England energy. The one maid servant Madam Chanterell had beguiled from her English home wept frantically, clinging to Temple's gown. It was for Temple, not her mistress, she had dared the sea and braved the savages. Madam Chanterell, still chiding the Maid, had not interrupted herself to speak to Roger. It was evident she felt his coming someway responsible for the disaster.

Sir John had been last to hear the commotion. Sleep still stupefied his expression as he came forth. His first glance was for the Maid and anxiety dispersed the heaviness as he saw her pallor and the weeping servant still clinging to her gown. His dull face showed a strong consternation even when he found the danger for the time was over.

"They'll not return before the night," Plimly announced impatiently. "Meantime we may prepare."

"You should have told us, Sir Humphrey. 'Twas you declared——" began Sir John.

The words became a whirring and were lost to Roger. He had stoutly resisted the hotly urged advice of Plimly.

"Wait—till the others be withdrawn," he had protested. "'Tis time then."

"Time! Thou'rt bleeding to death already!" Bozoun was angry and the look he cast upon the group surrounding the girl, full of contempt. "'Twill not matter to them," he had added. "Be not so squeamish."

Even as he spoke, the Maid started forward with a cry.

"Captain Verring is wounded! Look Sir John—he is falling!"

Roger did not hear. His struggle to conceal his growing weakness had ended in the stout arms of Plimly who caught him as he fell. Before Bozoun could stretch the unconscious figure upon the ground the girl was at his side, striving vainly to stop the flow of blood.

If she heard the loud protest of Madam Chanterell she did not reply, kneeling quickly to give the aid of her slender fingers. The man slit the heavy sleeve and she helped him deftly as he cut away the linen beneath,soaked miserably with the red stream that poured from the lacerated arm. The bullet had torn through the muscles close to the shoulder, ploughing deep on its way.

The Indian squaw who wrought with another slave in the smoky kitchen had come at Temple's demand and, as they dressed the tortured flesh, brought a pulp of moistened tobacco and bound it firmly upon the wound to stanuch the persistent welling of the blood.

As they fastened the bandages, pressing them smoothly above the squaw's poultice, Roger, half

conscious, half in the borderland of dreaming, thought he was again upon the *Araby Rose*.

"The Little Maid"—he began indistinctly. "Maccartey—where—is—the Little Maid?"

But the shame of weakness cleared his clouded mind and the sense of work undone would have brought him upright had not a light and peremptory touch pressed him back in quick denial.

She was putting the final stitches in the linen and he felt each careful motion, his eyes darkening in his white face as he watched Plimly, who had left them to resume command and now toiled rapidly at the loading of an arsenal of muskets piled about his feet.

Colour crept faintly into Roger's cheeks as the girl laid a dry compress above the bandage and pinned the cloth across it, her lips close, her eyes intent and troubled.

Roger turned a little toward her, unmindful of the pain, the whole soul of him drinking unhindered her nearness. For a breath she seemed to answer with a grace of tender giving, her self crying out to him from its lonely fastness. But dread of an unknown, a new-suspected danger woke him to full knowledge, a dread that had been striving to be recognized since first his eyes reopened.

"Your cousin—Gregory Bellingham—are you sure he is in London?"

The Indian woman had gone. The girl was still busied upon the blood-stained coat. Her long sleeve brushed his face as she lifted her arm to look at him, surprised.

"When last we knew he was in London. But

that was many months since. His fortunes have fallen with the coming of the new King, they say."

"May I see again the picture of your father?"

She drew the miniatures from her bodice, still greater surprise written on her face.

"Look quickly," she said as she opened the case. "I would not——"

A groan had risen to Roger's lips.

"Dost see no resemblance?" he asked feverishly.

"Resemblance?"

"Sir Humphrey—'tis perhaps—I may be mad. But the Indians were so few. One—the second—I saw in earnest converse with Sir Humphrey Wildglass not later than two days ago at Muddy River——"

He spoke in snatches. She listened fixedly. With coldness, with distrust, he thought. Did she believe he lied? Traducing a rival? Torn between his fear for her and his pride, he fell sharply silent.

"Sir Humphrey is our friend," the girl said at last slowly. Whether the deliberation was reflection or reproach, it but confirmed Roger's belief that she doubted him.

"I can stand now," he said. "My suspicions have an ill look in your eyes, Mistress Armitage. But I beg you to be cautious, and not to repeat that which I have confided, not even to your 'friend'—to Sir Humphrey."

He knew this request looked doubly the coward's attack, but to let the cavalier know he had seen the Indian at Boston was to betray New England—no less than the girl.

The night came quickly upon the late twilight.

Sir John, recklessly careless till now, panic-stricken at the sudden realization of that to which he had exposed his sister and his charge, looked helplessly to Roger for direction.

"By my faith," he ejaculated once. "I could swear, Captain, we'd met before—but where?"

The answer had been without words. Sir John's tolerant liking was too much a patronage for any recalling of the scene upon the London wharf. This new-created baronet should find no purring beneath a stroking hand in the son of Nicolas and Alison Verring. Roger's glance darkened coldly as he thought how soon the "insolent provincial" would be damned in Sir John's explosive vocabulary if that nobleman knew his meaning about the Little Maid.

The anger, even the jealousy, were somewhat eased in the swift need for deeds.

The small windows were firmly shuttered, the guns and ammunition were distributed or carefully placed ready to the hand, water stood in buckets wherever it might be wanted to put out a fallen brand. In all this and in the bestowal of the stock for greater safety, no less than in the planning of the night's campaign, Roger's was the directing voice. As the work drew on to accomplishment the fever of jealousy returned upon him, throbbing more cruelly than his wound.

He was conscious of each movement of the girl. It was to her the women held for comfort and support as the men to him. He would have approached to beg her to rest, but whenever he made the attempt Madam Chanterell was before him. Sir Humphrey

hovered about her, a growing insistency in his devotion. Even in the gloom of their preparations Roger saw that her flash of wit ever answered the cavalier and her laughter followed his sally.

It was what he should himself have wished, lest the man be set on his guard. But Roger felt only that she meant to put upon a cowardly accusation the contempt it deserved.

The hospitality of the enemy was irksome to him; contact with it had dulled the edge of the day's joy. The thanks, perfunctory and grudging, of Madam Chanterell, the goodfellowship of Sir John, offered as to an inferior, even the dependence on his strength that classed him with Bozoun Plimly, were bitter to his taste.

He was conscious of the roughness of his outer man after the woods, of the nice perfection of his rival.

The sentinels were placed before the dusk grew wholly into the dark. If the Nipmucks were not far from their own tribe there might be quick reprisals and Sir Humphrey, who knew little of the fire he played with, be victim to his own unscrupulous greed. But the danger was not for the earlier hours. Terror made the watchers trustworthy and Roger was driven by the weakness of his drained body and the raging of Bozoun Plimly to rest lest he fail in the hour of greatest stress.

It was nearly midnight when he wakened from a nightmare of visions to ever-increasing pain. He pulled himself erect by the back of the settle on which he had fallen asleep and got quickly to the enclosure outside.

The moon had not yet risen and he made the round of the sentries in the dark. One of the slaves and Sir John he sent within. The other negro with the Indian woman and himself would reinforce Plimly who had refused all sleep and, at Roger's word, kept a lynx eye upon the motions of Sir Humphrey Wildglass. It had been easy to reject the services of the cavalier. He was too new to the wilderness.

The night rustled in solemn warning on every hand. The lonesome call of a loon, the short bark or howl of wild things disturbed in their nightly ramble, the depressing hoot of the owls, sounded from near at hand. Strange creatures snuffed at the stockade and slipped stealthily away.

The fever of his hurt was burning in corroding heat through Roger's whole body, and the hot night stifled him. He kept strict watch on his sentinels within as well as on the forest without, and essayed often the use of his wounded arm, forced to desist lest renewed bleeding render him helpless.

As the moon sailed clear of the spiring tops of pines and firs, the door opened and the Maid came hurriedly toward him. She bore something in her hand.

"Drink, please," she begged as she held it out. "You should not be here—you risk too much for us——" Her voice faltered. "Please drink it. The Indian woman is skilful; she taught me the way 'twas made." She glanced hurriedly around as if fearing interruption. "Captain Verring——"

He had taken the cup, and moved closer to her, listening.

"Ah, Mistress, 'tis here you are! Poor Madam bemoaneth fearfully within the house, not doubting you be devoured already by brutal salvages. She called to me to fetch you." Sir Humphrey had come with no delay upon her track. "Is the shoulder not vastly painful, Captain? 'Tis a weight of obligation you've laid upon us strangers; 'tis sad the reward for so much hardship should be but treasures in Heaven!"

"Your solicitude is greater than my need, Sir Humphrey," Roger answered with ironic calm. He had turned back quickly, hoping the Maid would linger. She hesitated an instant, but when she had seen the cup emptied she took it from him and went away with the cavalier.

He was not left long alone. The voice of Sir Humphrey sounded again beside him.

"Rash and forgetful fellow, thou hast yet much to learn!" The moonlight showed the unpleasant smile upon the well-marked features that in the night required no touch of art to make them young.

Roger leaned on his musket, gazing through the loophole into the space outside.

"Wert thou still for Montreal—to pleasure the worthy Phips with news," the voice went smoothly on, "or—nay—was't a sweet care for us that brought thee strolling? 'Twas thoughtful but——"

"Needless," Roger interrupted calmly. His eyes returned from their exploration of the clearing and rested in close scrutiny on the man's face. "Sir Humphrey seems not to desire protection. His friends here be too numerous. 'Tis pity," he continued more slowly, "he stretches not his invisible *ægis*, to save others."

"'Out of the mouth of babes'! 'Tis a brave rhetoric they give thee, the schoolmasters of Boston!" Sir Humphrey smiled again. "Wouldst have me Lord Protector of all thy wilderness?"

"God forbid. Commonwealths and dictators be not in fashion with us." Roger answered the smile with one as cool. "Rather would my wilderness crave another boon of Sir Humphrey Wildglass."

"Crave on, my gay Puritan." Roger turned with deliberate waiting, gazed again toward the forest, and fixed once more upon the face of the cavalier the look that studied him line by line.

"That he pursue the crusade for gold—in Canada," he said unmoved.

"Modest, forsooth! 'Twould give me life, young sir. I die, here, of gloom and doleful dumps—— But each treasure in turn! And hark ye, my short-haired knight, some treasures be not for *thy* protection. 'Twere better for thee to stroll elsewhere. Sir Humphrey Wildglass can protect his friends."

"Then Mistress Armitage—is not his 'friend'?"

Roger's lips did not relax their curve, but his eyes kept rigorous guard upon more than the forest as Sir Humphrey moved away.

The dawn looked upon them still undisturbed. If the Maid made further attempt to speak with her defender she was prevented. Roger could not see that she did attempt it, and he cursed his sanguine spirit that had hoped too much for the little beginning whose tone his folly must have then misread. At the corners of his eyes branching lines were marked in the youthful skin.

Bozoun Plimly came to him and they talked long, in the centre of the stockaded space where none could approach unseen.

"Remember I have rashly betrayed I suspect his spying. For the other he is not warned. But let the Maid never from thy sight—set the slaves to do that which is too far afield—and watch."

"Aye—aye." Bozoun nodded. "'Twill not be tried again—the Indians. He's too cute for that. But I'll watch—fear not. Go yet thou must not, Roger—risking the woods and a worse——"

"I must, Bozoun. Keep guard over the Maid—day and night." He moved swiftly away, and then came back, added another word, and was gone.

Plimly looked after him with a scowl of anxious indignation.

There was open distress at the departure. Madam feared the withdrawal of his wise vigilance; Sir John blustered, peremptory and suspicious, at his decision. Roger, giving brief reassurance, felt certain the danger from the Indians was passed; but of that he could say nothing.

"It is not safe in the woods—— You are wounded, Captain Verring." The girl had risen, between him and Sir Humphrey Wildglass, and as she spoke, she looked at him strangely, suddenly whiter than himself. But she said no more, nor did Madam and Sir Humphrey allow chance for any word alone; and as he set out he saw the cavalier take the place by the Maid's side and heard the smooth voice in mockery of farewell:

"Be cautious in thy going, my good Captain.

And fear naught for us. The treasure shall be protected."

So he went away sore wounded, and for the scourging of his thoughts scarce heeded if enemies lurked beside the trail so painfully retraced. But the Verring will showed more than ever strongly in his strong features as he went, and there was determination mightier than pain in the unswerving purpose of his look.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE MADNESS OF BOTOLPH'S TOWN

"By the pricking of my thumbs
Something wicked this way comes."

THE slow stream of people issuing from the Thursday Lecture flowed back to a respectful distance from the door of the North Church as, through a lane where solemn boys and girls bobbed and curtseyed, Mr. Cotton Mather progressed methodically toward the street.

Below the wide steps he stopped, halting his orderly progress at the stocks. There, in full view of the departing congregation sat a youth, his face blue with cold, his breast covered by a huge D that hung bald and accusing from his neck.

Behind the minister's back tongues held long in leash had taken quick vantage of recovered freedom.

"A learned discourse—and a timely!" The man who spoke fluttered the notes in his hand.

A young woman in a scarlet cloak supplied the extra tribute.

"Eben, couldst thou do like Mr. Godfroy, write and listen at the same moment?" She looked up coquettishly at her husband, who stared at the complacent Mr. Godfroy without envy.

"Nay, Lois, I could not," he replied contentedly.

"A great discourse!" the taker of notes was re-

peating. "Verily, Satan's witches must have trembled had they been there."

"They were searching words! And who knows? None is safe." The woman that answered looked fearfully about as she half whispered her response, her pallid face twitching with excitement. "Mistress Waite saith her Zillah was seized of a sudden with a sharp pricking like a needle, and found it sticking in the flesh of her foot—which she drew out and showed it to her mother—a fearsome great needle! And there was no mark of it neither on the foot, for I, too, looked. She can but suspect 'tis Goody Burrill. Only sennight she refused the old woman a noggin o' milk and the beldame swore at her." The speaker lifted a pinch of snuff to her nose and sneezed violently.

In the pause, her nearest neighbour spoke up hastily.

"I ask my Reuben every day if he feeleth any strange pain," she announced with snapping eyes. "There's enemies made by an honest tongue would like no better than to afflict a helpless child."

Reuben, waiting, a drab and joyless image, beside his mother, looked up at her with a terrified attention.

" 'Tis fearful! And there can be none so fitted to deal with the matter as is Mr. Mather. 'Tis well he is here——" Mr. Godfroy was rolling his notes into a cylinder in his hand, preparing to stow them away. He broke off both speech and motion, gazing horrified at the whisperer.

The mother of Reuben cried out. The frightened child seized upon her gown with a nervous clutch.

"Woman, thou art bewitched thyself!" Mr. Godfroy had recovered his voice, but he remained motionless, dwelling with alarmed fascination upon the pallid features that grimaced at him helplessly. The woman essayed to speak but her tongue was become unruly.

Many had turned to stare with Mr. Godfroy and the mother of Reuben, in a horror that had its element of satisfaction. Here was visible proof of Mr. Mather's words, a fitting climax to his denunciation. The twitching grew more ungoverned as the victim met the fixed and gloating gaze of the throng that rapidly increased. With a sound of angry terror she pushed the nearest out of her way and escaped.

"She had the strength of ten!"

"Who hath afflicted her?"

"'Tis an old affection of Mary Epps—any one will tell ye," put in a calmer voice. "'Twas ever a pastime of her schoolfellows to make her angry that her face might twitch. "'Twas worse then —though 'tis late returned upon her."

"Some witch hath her then this long time in subjection." Mr. Godfroy spoke with stern reprobation of the speaker's tone. "Who was it could thus torment her?"

"Any one could do it," began the voice, but it was interrupted.

"'Twas Silas Tyfield who would be always thorning her."

"Aye—he was a dreadful thorn." The crowd looked at one another with questioning significance, dispersing in smaller groups toward their houses.

The young woman of the scarlet cloak threw back its folds and let the marvels of her "appearing-out" dress flash casually upon those damsels who were not yet brides.

Mr. Godfroy took the same way with the married pair, recounting the sufferings of the witch-ridden of other towns.

"'Tis their own son that they accuse," he finished mysteriously, rounding out a tale of great distress. "Truly doth Mr. Mather say the Devil hath marked the godliness of New England and would fain conquer it for his own. Why should Satan linger in London, a place he hath already! And mark you this, 'tis only since the coming of so many Londoners and London ways that witchcraft rageth."

"They say," volunteered the bridegroom, "that the beautiful Mistress Armitage be a witch—but for my part I believe it not."

"And why not she?" demanded his wife. "She hath the most curious power. Even the animals follow her."

"And no wonder," began the husband, "an' they have eyes."

"Hush, there she cometh." The young woman pressed her husband's arm in warning. "I'll warrant me she's been not near the meeting."

The cold that had pinched and sharpened the features of those who had sat long at their devotions had but added to the glow in the cheeks of Mistress Armitage. She was returning from the house of Lady Phips, who was anxious and lonely in Sir William's absence, and the pleasure of a service effectively performed gave a special buoyancy to

her motion. Though in all her modish costume there was not a note of colour half so bright as the scarlet cloak of the bride, she seemed the more vivid of the two.

"Who is't saith she is a witch?" demanded Mr. Godfroy curiously.

"'Tis in everybody's mouth," answered the young woman again, lifting her eyebrows in surprise. "Beulah Munch hath felt her spell. Often she hath gone to her, minded to say a certain thing, and against her will hath been made to say just the opposite. Even Sir Humphrey Wildglass seems to think 'tis true. And he hath a better knowledge, being the friend of Madam Chanterell."

"But what hath she done, Lois?" persisted the husband. "Beulah Munch was never one to know well her own mind after 'twas made up. If 'twere witchcraft whenever a woman thought a certain thing and said the opposite——"

"Jesting is ill-timed, Eben," reproved the girl. "What if she came at night in the form of a cat and tempted Beulah to sign the Devil's book——" She hesitated, shuddering.

Both men exclaimed in shocked credulity, looking with redoubled interest after the trim grace of the figure that had passed them on the other side of the way.

"'Twas not Beulah told me about the Devil's book but Goodwife Bolt who must have it from her," the bride added honestly.

"Sir Humphrey Wildglass—a pleasant-spoken man though I fear his life hath been of a reckless sort! He hath commanded a suit of kerseymere

from Mr. Viall's son Luther, and is most particular it be plain and of a sober hue. Mayhap he seeth that the ornament of a godly spirit is more to be desired than fine raiment. Lodgeth he yet at the Sign of the Orange Tree?" Mr. Godfroy's pause was full of a weighty eagerness.

"He is lately returned there. He was away from the town when Governor Phips set forth for Pemaquid." The young woman shivered a little in the keen wind as she spoke. "'Twas the very day after Sir John Winchcombe came back to Boston with his family. I remember, for that Goodwife Bolt had not made an end of her preserving and was in some straits to stop and prepare his room, and Goody Quail was not to be had, being employed at the Widow Pullen's house by Madam Chanterell."

Others besides themselves had looked with a sinister interest after the girl who passed them unconscious of their scrutiny, absorbed in the memory of the hour just gone. It had been a pleasant hour; Lady Phips had talked much of Boston and its people, of the governor, and of his friends.

Mr. Willard, impressive in the full canonicals of Sunday black and dazzling bands of sheer and speckless linen, turned his eyes upon her gravely, a kindly pity in the glance. His flock, taking their way in many directions from the South Meeting, mingled with the congregation of the rival church, talking with an air of cold reserve. Few, like Mr. Godfroy, were alone. Whole families, oftenest three generations, went side by side, or drove in lumbering coach or chariot toward a ferry. From

Hannover street, through twisting paths and alleys, the throng was moving with more haste toward Queen street and the prison.

Here the crowd was somewhat more worldly in its make-up. Outlandish garb of sailors strayed ashore, bright caps worn by the lads and set upon locks trimmed evenly at the collar like a mop, gay feathers and bright flounces in costumes that defied the law, relieved the earthly dulness of frieze and lockram, rough dowlas and brown duffels spun and dyed upon the hearth.

Here too, about the pillory set up before the jail, was some excitement. The pelting was at its height. Eggs aimed at the victims of the law fell lower down and spoiled the complacence of some who dodged too late, affording the impartial looker-on a grim delight. Stale odours of rotted vegetables and varied garbage meant for missiles made an unpleasant stench. None save the more delicate and the self-conscious who feared their dignity refused the sport.

Two of the targets were beyond a saving sense of righteous retribution. Their faces, bruised and smeared past recollection gave no sign of life. But the third, marred and fouled like the others, gazed down upon the men who did the pelting, still conscious of each blow. His ears, nailed to the planking, through which his head and hands protruded, stood out grotesquely on either side the discoloured features.

"'Tis James Hewson!" volunteered Mr. Godfroy with deep interest, as he came near enough to distinguish the man's countenance.

"He that would have it Eunice Fayerweather but dreamed she saw a witch-dog in the night?" asked the bridegroom.

"Yea, 'tis he," answered Mr. Godfroy with fresh pleasure in the recognition. "He stirreth up much strife, speaking scurrilously of the Commission and saying that the witches have no true trial. If he be not one of the malignants, I know not what to say."

The young wife touched her husband peremptorily, averting her look as a flinty pebble set the blood flowing on Hewson's face.

"Come, Eben, there be all the chores to do," she admonished. "And thou saidst there were lumps in the brindle cow's bag this morning."

"Dost think it may be the brindle is bewitched?" asked Mr. Godfroy, transferring his interest.

"I saw old Simeon Farley at the barn but yest'r-e'en, Eben. Come quickly," urged the wife. "If we lose the cow I fear me my father will say thou didst feed her wrong——. Good-even, Captain Verring."

Roger had fallen upon the party suddenly as he made his way up from the wharves, whither, after the service, he had gone to meet an overdue argosy just come to anchor. He greeted the three somewhat coldly, having small liking for the pious gossip of Mr. Godfroy.

He had chosen the way leading past the house where Sir John Winchcombe had again ensconced his family, and was walking rapidly. But in the enforced pause for fitting reply to the bride's salutation, he came opposite the high platform of the pillory, and lifted his eyes.

"Hewson!—An outrage—— What hath he done?" he exclaimed.

The constable standing quietly by, beruffed and periwigged, upheld his staff and watched with long-drawn face the merciless humour of the crowd, loath to set a period to the reward of crime. Jacob Munch, a grin half born upon his smug features, was making ready to aim a mud-splashed apple he had picked up from the pavement.

"'Tis more than an hour since the Lecture! Did the law decree these men be killed? Why are they not released?" Roger spoke with a force that brought an angry murmur from those who liked not their sport condemned. Jacob Munch dropped his apple.

"Captain Verring hath a great compassion on thieves and malefactors," he said to the starched citizen who stood beside him.

The constable, dangling his iron keys, moved slowly in the direction of the platform. The east wind came strongly from the water, and the cold November dusk was settling fast.

While the others had sought the pillory-gazing throng, the Maid had turned into an alley and escaped the multitude in the wider streets. Faces peeped curiously from small-paned windows as she approached, and from one house set back among the apple trees a sash was swung out upon its hinges while a head thrust itself forth to see who passed and whither.

"La—she be going by the Old Way! Who is she, Ma'am?" a voice said wonderingly.

The Mill Pond was dark and the willow leaves

blown thickly in her path. At the one bent down camel-wise to the bank she paused, and laying her silk-mitted hand lightly upon its upright fellow, looked about her with delight.

When she moved away, she drew a deep breath of the clean air and gazed backward as if loath to go, breaking off a bunch of red berries from a bush beside the path.

The Old Way was hid by its wild hedge from the view of the curious, and as she went she lifted the wide, flowing skirts daintily and slipped her high-arched shoes with a pleasant rustling through the fallen leaves, smiling at a grey squirrel that ran down a tree trunk, gave her a twinkling glance, and fled like thistle-down.

Again in the street she moved with a decorous step, but swiftly lest the day be gone before she should come to her own door. The wind brought to her the salt of the sea and the burned smell of autumn. Her eyes still smiled and her step was light upon the broken flagging.

All at once an excited group blocked her way, boys in a close and excited knot, wrangling, gesticulating over some object on the ground. She would have made a detour and so avoided them, had another sound not arrested her, a sound distinct from the suppressed cries and quarrelling of the lads.

At her approach the largest boy straightened himself and she saw what was the occupation that so engaged them. In a miniature pillory hung a struggling black kitten, its head and forepaws dragged through rude holes in an oaken board that

was nailed across two supports driven firmly into the earth beside the path.

The largest boy bent forward again, trying to force a mammoth pin through the kitten's ear into the hard wood behind. The flesh had torn, but the oak would not yield. Now, a stone in his right hand, he battered at the pin and it held fast. The kitten was choking.

With a cry of anger the girl sprang to the tortured animal and lifted it, pillory and all, in her arms.

"Ye little brutes!" The eyes that had smiled were scornful and flashing as she confronted them.

The stakes had not yielded without force, but so strong was her wrath a single effort had wrenched them free. The boys, fleeing at her sudden onslaught, slunk hurriedly to a distance and stood eying her sullenly, expecting more than words.

Shubael Munch was the first to venture near.

"'Tis a witch-cat—'tis black," he cried out in warning. "Put it down, Mistress Armitage!"

"She's a witch herself," shrieked the largest boy wrathfully. "My mother says she's a witch."

"A witch! A witch!" yelled the pack, rallying to their leader's cry.

"She's not a witch," screamed Shubael. "I know her—— She's not a witch."

"She is, I say. A witch! A witch!—Pelt her! 'Tis her cat—'Tis the witch's cat!" the big boy yelled. He had struck at Shubael with the stone still in his hand, and then hurled the weapon furiously at the girl.

The momentary dismay was over. The weight

of scorn and blazing indignation unfollowed by the retributive potency of blows could not impress them long. Shubael fought them with all the might of his little fists. A woman looked from an open door, but hearing the cry, "A witch!" shut and barred herself within.

The Maid covered the kitten with her cape and turned her back to the youthful mob that had been greatly reinforced in the confusion.

"Come, Shubael," she called, but Shubael was stretched on the ground and did not answer.

Sticks, pebbles, stones—all the projectiles the neighbourhood afforded—fell upon her pitilessly, but she wheeled to look for the lad, rousing him by her call.

"Come, Shubael," she cried again.

"A witch! Beat the witch!"

The pack were in full cry and they no longer contented themselves with missiles, but pursued, armed with heavier cudgels.

Shubael had gotten upon his feet. With him she turned again and fled. She was swift, but the wind twisting her gown, held her back relentlessly. At the corner of Wing lane the foremost had his clutch upon its silken folds, his cudgel raised high to strike, when he was lifted in a vigorous grasp and flung back yelping among his comrades. His sudden arrest and the shock of his descent shook the breath from the would-be zealot, and the chase drew off.

The frenzied shouts of the urchins had carried in spite of the wind, but against the increasing violence of the blast they had sounded to Roger like cries for help.

The Maid was silent, trembling, and bewildered at the fanatic fury of the assault. Mr. Godfroy observed the group from the other side of the street.

He saw the girl hold up some object like a yoke, fastened to a writhing kitten, and saw Roger take it and set to work to get the animal free. The lad, crying with rage, was battling with his unruly breath. His clothes were torn and one eye surmounted by a dismal patch.

"Shubael fought them for me." Temple smiled down at the boy with a glance that dried his tears and flushed his cheeks with happy pride.

"Shubael is the bravest lad in Boston," began Roger. "I wish——"

The child became radiant, though the Maid had interrupted.

"You will have to cut it out. They have hurt its head pushing it through the hole," she said.

"Can you—are you enough recovered to hold it quiet while I cut away the wood?" Roger looked at her anxiously and his look brought back her colour.

She wrapped her cape about the kitten's paws and took it with a reassuring touch. It turned its yellow eyes up at her with an earnest gaze of questioning patience, and the scurrying speed of its frightened heart grew less.

With the point of his hunting knife Roger carefully chipped out the hole. Shubael helped, his eyes shining with satisfaction, as he clamped his bruised hands tightly upon the board.

"Do you suppose 'tis a witch cat?" he asked, staring at the little creature timidly. The kitten was watching him with the topaz eyes, full enough

of gratitude and appeal to startle a child who had never before seen a cat save as an object of sport. The look seemed to Shubael too human for an animal.

"No, Shubael, he's my kitten now, and I'm not a witch," answered the girl. "Though they did call me one. Poor pussy—what I'm to do with you I don't know. Madam won't have a kitten near her dwelling. She hath a great dislike and fear of cats, above all of them that be black." She rubbed the little creature's head softly as she talked.

"I can care for him, if you'll trust him to me," Roger replied. He had put up his knife and taken the board from Shubael. "Now, pussy—pull," he said.

Shubael left them, hastening to forestall the double punishment of truancy and the tearing of Sunday clothes. As he started, he put out his hand tentatively and rubbed the kitten's head as Temple had done. The released captive was boiling and bubbling songfully within his black throat.

"He's glad, isn't he!" the boy said, unaccustomed laughter breaking over his round face.

As the sturdy, anxious legs disappeared, running with fear to spur their energy, the Maid set straight her hat and moved onward beside Roger. In the weeks that had divided the night in the stockade from her return to Boston she had not seen him. But twice Roger had seen her, and more than twice he had been to Andover. On each visit he had conferred with Bozoun Plimly.

Through Bozoun's aid a new element of safety had been introduced into the dwelling, Nopomuk,

who had remained with Captain Phips, to water the roses in my Lady's garden in summer and all the year to drive the chestnut pair that drew her carriage to and from the great house in Green lane.

Roger and Lady Phips had first conceived the plan, and the Governor had summoned the one-time diver and put before him the peril of the Little Maid and the need of secrecy. The eyes of the Southern Indian had softened like an eager child's.

So it was that Bozoun had demanded help for the harvesting and sent a messenger to Boston when Sir John, after a heated contest as to the wages of the labourer, had given his consent.

"Mistress Armitage seemed much moved at the red man's appearing," Bozoun had stated at his next report. "I doubt not the damsel hath seen him driving my Lady's chariot. But none may guess what passes in a woman's mind, leastways not with *her* if Sir John or Madam or Sir Humphrey be about. I do opine, however, she hath remarked I keep a watch upon her, and seemeth not ill pleased. Sir John careth for little but his food and the gold he hopeth to gather from this season's crop—— So now the Amalekite hath all things his own way, for Madam dotes upon him. He is ever about the Maid and if she take him not I fear he will hang himself. You need fear naught from him save a kidnapping, for 'tis sure he favoureth the maiden. And if thou'lt wait here I'll get a bunch of herbs I promised Goodwife Bolt. Canst carry them?"

Even Bozoun, astute in wood lore and shrewd enough for most men, was hoodwinked then by the contradictions of Sir Humphrey's nature. Roger

had set two sentinels to guard the Maid's life. The greater danger he could not avert, that she might trust, might even love, Sir Humphrey. It was ever a wonder to him how the weeks went by at all and left him sane, for even in retrospect they stretched endlessly in aeons of wretchedness.

He would not question Bozoun, and he had heard the little that the man-of-all-work vouchsafed with a sense of distress, born partly of an unreasonable dread of spying, and partly of a distaste to hear another speak of her.

Now Nopomuk was back again driving the horses of the Governor, and the Maid had learned that very day at whose instance the Indian had been sent to guard her in the woods. Lady Phips had hinted at no danger but the fear of Nipmucks, being rarely discreet. One thing the Maid knew that Lady Phips did not, Bozoun being also wise in the times to betray a secret to the one concerned, and making some chance of converse when she had said farewell.

As they walked, although her body still trembled from the sudden attack, her mind had already forgotten it to dwell on other things. Roger's anger had grown hotter, and shame filled him that in his city she should suffer such brutality.

"'Tis what comes of taking children to the hangings and setting them to stone the poor creatures in the pillory! They are no better than wild beasts!" He spoke with a vehement suppression. "They should be—— What welcome to Boston for you after so long an absence!"

"They are not Boston," the girl answered. "There be rough and savage lads even in London!

Boston is for me the Governor and Lady Phips—my friends."

"'Tis many months since you were here. I had hoped Sir John would bring you back earlier." He attempted to settle the kitten that was climbing from its refuge.

"And yet you came but once to see us, though you were hunting not far away—more than once," the girl replied. "Here, wind this scarf about the kitten's paws. Then he will stay."

Roger obeyed her, answering her first words.

"I saw you one day at the river gate—and again with Sir Humphrey Wildglass at the spring."

"I went there but once. Sir Humphrey taunted me with womanish fondness for the scene of an adventure, and I went no more. How long before Governor Phips will return?" she asked. "Is it so important Pemaquid be fortified?"

"'Tis most important," Roger answered promptly. "It commands a region that hath endured much from hostile tribes of the North. 'Twill be the saving of many lives. I should be with the expedition, but Sir William refused me."

"Lady Phips told me. He needed tried men at home to watch the interests of the colony, and to defend us if there be outbreak here." The Maid looked up, a light of admiration in her glance, that the dusk hid. "You are young, Captain Verring, to have so much entrusted to you. They say you were offered a place on the Commission to try the witches. I am glad you would not take it."

"I could not. Mr. Saltonstall hath resigned, being unwilling to go on with trials that convict all

who will not confess. Even a dog hath been condemned." He smiled faintly, falling grave again at once.

"Could you have helped—such men as you and Mr. Saltonstall?"

"Nay—he had no effect, and I should have been scouted for my youth—and five can outvote two." He drew a long breath as if the subject weighed much upon his thoughts.

"There is such fear in the very air!" The girl moved unconsciously nearer as she spoke.

"Men are beside themselves. Them that be silent are feared for their silence and them that talk for their 'much speaking'," Roger answered. In their tones was the confidence of those who utter themselves with an unwonted freedom. "I would it were over. The whole world seemeth possessed," he went on. "'Tis a melancholy greeting for you to hear but tales of sorrow and affright."

He harked back to her, the troubled disquiet still in his tone. His look graver yet, with the yearning of one powerless to defend the loved from evil, gazed on her for a moment steadfastly. In the shadows of the growing dark he could not see the brave glow that answered the look and the sudden shining of the dark eyes turned to his own.

"There was dread in the loneliness of Andover—though that was only fear of men and of wild beasts. But the fear of friends"—she dropped her voice, "and so many poor creatures in great suffering and torment! Oh no wonder there is panic! But I am glad to be in Boston," she said quickly, and her voice that had almost a note of gay content laughed

above the strong quiet of a wordless peace, a peace that held them both in the security of unaffrighted happiness.

"Hath Lady Phips told you of the scandal the Governor created ere he went away?" Roger's tone had lightened cheerfully. "'Twas a fortnight's wonder! There be some who suffer from it yet!"

"Nay, tell me! What did he do?" asked the Maid contentedly.

"He gave a mighty dinner to all the ship carpenters of Boston and made no less display for them than for the Council! Oh, 'twas a most grievous scandal!" Roger laughed, and felt that she laughed too.

"I like it of him," she said.

Their talk dwelt on nothing more remarkable, but when he left her, it was to walk still in the blessed air where her invisible presence did not forsake him.

Once voices harsh enough to force their way into this excluding sense of joy brought to him a painful realization of something without this better consciousness.

"She *is* a witch! and hath Shubael as well as Jacob in her wicked spell!" It was the high voice of Mistress Munch raised in a scolding fury.

"Nay, I'll speak as I please," the voice rose still higher in wrath at some interruption. "Look at the child—look at him, fighting and brawling like a mud-scallion—and his clothes that I made myself all ruined by this—— Nay, I say, I care not. They can hear who will! An' Christopher doth not flog

him well each time he speak to her, I'll do't myself. And I'd flog Jacob, too, were I a man—moping after a witch, a——"

"Mistress Armitage isn't a witch, Mam!—— Canst flog me all thou wilt——" Shubael's voice, broken with pain of many lashes, was dauntless as timid voices are when roused to battle.

Across the way, at the Sign of the Orange Tree, Sir Humphrey heard; and gazing from his window, saw Roger return as he had seen him go. He stood a long time thoughtful before he turned away, and the look upon his face was not all malignance, but mixed with a certain anger more human and more anxious.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE "POISONED CHALICE"

BEULAH MUNCH sat sewing by the window of the living room. Her eyes were fixed on the band she was felling and did not lift to gaze after those who came and went from Tramount street to Hannover. The settle was drawn between her and the fire. By the window it was cold, but she did not stir, even when the blaze dropped to scattered coals and the draught blew the ashes of the wood upon their fading glow.

Suddenly her impassivity changed. She raised her head, looked after one who passed without turning, and a sound escaped her lips. With a swift motion she laid her work aside. In the shortest time it could take to find and don her bonnet and mantle she had opened the door and was out in the fresh November breeze.

The sun was bright and the streets seemed warmer than the room which she had left. Even at the shortest, bonnet and mantle had taken many minutes, but she followed quickly the direction of the figure that had vanished, pausing only to walk more sedately as she came nearer the yard of the Widow Pullen's house.

Temple Armitage was without, among the flower beds. In her hand was a mass of the late asters, white, and purple, and streaked with pink tints on

a snowy ground. The warmth that seldom left her cheeks had deepened while she talked. Roger, leaning upon the unpainted dial, was listening and as she finished the tale she told, both laughed, the silent laughter of those who understand each other well, and their eyes met an instant in a voluntary interchange of pleasant comprehension. Then she bent suddenly to the unplucked asters at her feet and Beulah, pausing at the gate, saw the look that watched the Maid, fallen upon the spot where the soft blackness of the hair made fairer the fairness of the neck.

"Come in, Mistress Munch." If Temple were not best pleased none could guess it from the welcome.

Beulah tightened her lips, spoiling the redness of her childish mouth.

"I'm afraid I interrupt," she answered. "Two they say——"

"'Tis indeed pity to expose a solitary maiden to the influence of two such Puritans!" Temple shook her head. "I fear the Widow Pullen was of a frivolous mind like me! See how brazenly her flowers come forth!"

When Roger left them a half-hour was nigh spent.

"If you go now I shall be sure you are angered at having your pretty speeches interrupted," Beulah had pleaded.

"If Captain Verring were angered by interruption he hath already undergone good discipline," the Maid had responded. "I am a most ill-conditioned hearer ever marred a man's best period!"

When at length Roger had forced himself away,

the task had grown no easier. He would have preferred Beulah had not come, but the presence of that inferior world that was not Temple Armitage was of too little moment ever to destroy his enjoyment.

Beulah had shown to better advantage after her greeting. It was hard to harbour self-consciousness or meanness with Temple near. But the forlornness of her mood increased as its bitterness lessened.

The charm of Roger Verring's manner, so far removed from the pious bluntness of her father, that covered a selfish disregard of others' rights, so different from the sleek oiliness of Jacob, appealed to her with new force. Once more her thoughts contrasted Jacob's unkindness with Roger's remembered devotion to his mother. The clairvoyance of her own feeling made it plain to her how strong was the power that was drawing together this stranger and the man she had loved ever since she had been old enough to see that he was handsomer and finer than the lads she knew.

Roger had never singled her out for even a passing interest, but till now no other had appeared whom she thought more likely to secure what she had determined should be her own. If the position of the Verrings and the sense of something lacking in that accorded the Munches had added ambition to her love, it would be hard to separate the more worldly fibres from the glittering fabric woven by a stronger wish.

Beulah's was not a religious nature, and she had found no comfort in the simulated ecstasies of her

faith. What in Jacob became a coarse hypocrisy was in her a simple acquiescence. The shallow jealousies and the vulgar complacency of her parents, the mother's pettiness and the father's hectoring, arbitrary will, had hardened in her into a silent tenacity more subtle and more deadly. In the confining duties of a world where marriage was the beginning and the end, and where the pickling of fruits and the brewing of cordials was the highest form of incense to be offered to the gods, it was scarce probable that a soul like this one would create for itself resources, or that the single feeling that gave life to an otherwise heavy character would do more than afford a channel for the outpouring of a supreme self-absorption.

For Beulah the world contained herself and Roger and, more remotely, those who would envy her when she had made him hers. Her clinging and dependence were a manner acquired with the ease whereby we fit ourselves to an ideal society holds before our eyes, and never a part of her true self. She needed no one, felt no claim, no devotions, save for Roger. To secure him, not for his happiness but hers, she would have sacrificed all others without a qualm and, to her mind armed with the unwitting egotism of the truly selfish, no surrender of her determination would even have presented itself as possible.

The return of Temple to Boston had brought with it a renewal of jealous uneasiness, or she would not have followed Roger to the door of the Widow Pullen with an impulsive haste foreign to her usual more quiet calculation. For the first time she had

realized how far beyond her reach events had carried the fulfilment of her plans.

After Roger's farewell, she answered abstractedly and went after the Maid with downcast eyes as the two girls mounted the stairs to the square room where the crisp breeze rustled the valences about the curtained bed.

It was Temple's chamber and it brought another pang to the unhappy Beulah. She did not hold Mistress Armitage as her superior, save in the matter of owning a great number of jewels that she seldom had the sense to wear, but she recognized here, as in the simpler ease of Temple's manner, a something she felt sure would seem to Roger superior. Her eyes travelled from the quaint engravings on the wall to the books, which lay upon the table instead of sitting bolt upright in undisturbed fixity of pose, and she turned from both with a prim distaste to let her gaze seek the wide mirror.

"'Tis grown cold," she said with a little shiver, her plump hands busying themselves with untying her bonnet and curling closer over a wet forefinger the stray locks the wind had blown awry.

Temple, going straight to the deep fireplace, had set some pine sticks ablaze beneath the logs.

"I will shut the windows till the room be warmer," she said. "Was it the things come by the *Pelloquin* you meant?"

"Goodwife Bolt said you got a full chest from the ship," Beulah answered with more interest. "I thought to send myself by the next packet."

The Little Maid had closed the windows, not without a longing breath of the clear coldness of

the air, and the big fire sent a too ardent heat upon them.

"What have you been doing in these days?" she asked with pleasant heartiness as she knelt before the carven monsters of a chest.

Her visitor watched in silence as the deep lower drawer slid forward and the cambric cover was lifted from the contents. On the very top lay a silk, pale green and changeable, with a mere shifting light of pink, and here and there a tumbling rosebud in the folds.

The purring *O* that was ever Mistress Munch's first word at the sight of uncut silks did not come, and Temple glanced upward, surprised.

The soft pinkness of Beulah's skin was darkly suffused and her eyes were full. As Mistress Armitage looked up, the tears fell and rained thickly down the reddened cheeks.

Temple sprang to her feet swiftly, a wonderful compassion softening the warm brilliance of her beauty.

She put an arm gently around the weeping girl and drew her down beside her on the cushioned window seat.

"What is it, Beulah? Tell me"—her voice had the comforting life that trouble longs to hear—"what has grieved thee, child?"

The words Captain Phips had said to her so long ago! She grew gentler still, with the recollection.

Beulah slid out of the encircling arm, upon the floor, and buried her face in the cushions. Temple laid a fine hand softly on the elaborately mounted hair and waited.

"I'm—I'm afraid to tell you what it is." Beulah moved still farther away. But the gentle hand slipped to her shoulder and she turned back suddenly, her arms about Temple's waist, her wet, blue eyes gazing up anxiously.

"Oh, I can't!" she gasped, but this time she dropped her head in Temple's lap and cried there more quietly.

"How can you fear to tell me, Beulah?" The Maid had dropped her rarely used *thou* of affection and her voice was graver, though none the less compassionate. "Perhaps it is something wherein I could help, my child." A certainty that it was something painful for herself, a sense of the essential weakness of the crying girl, was in the gravity and the gentleness.

"If thou wouldst only take thy spell from Jacob! 'Tis making him ill—he hardly eats at all—and yesternoon he would not touch his pudding and he left the meers cakes my mother brought for him at bed time—— If he should die—— Oh, if thou didst not want him why put the spell upon him?"

Temple sat erect suddenly, her breath held with the shock of sharp displeasure. Beulah's words offended much that, in her nature, was sacredly guarded from discussion. But after a minute's waiting she spoke again, still gently.

"Beulah," her voice was very low and rich, "your brother will not die. If he hath a liking for me that is more than mere kindness I am more grieved than thou. I never wished it. I have ever shown—I have been, so you yourself have said, even careless of courtesy to him."

"But Mother says that is the way of all coquettes —he but admires the more. 'Twas ever the way to make Jacob want a thing to show him it displeased you he should try for it," put in Beulah eagerly.

"Your mother may be right concerning the ways of coquettes—but I have never been aught but truthful with your brother." Temple rose, leaving her accuser whimpering softly among the cushions. A righteous anger took the softness from her eyes and she paced up and down twice before she trusted herself to say more.

"I think," she added presently, "your brother hath been much used to having his own will, and doth not easily understand his wishes might be unpleasing to another."

Beulah rose also, her cheeks reddening again, defiantly.

"And why shouldn't he expect what he wants!" she demanded angrily. "There is no young man more sought after. There be plenty to take him. 'Tis not that he is unpleasing that he suffers, but thou hast put a spell on him. How can he let thee be till thou art through tormenting him? Even Shubael thou hast bewitched so every day the poor child must be beaten because he——"

"Beulah!" Beulah stopped short and cowered into the window, although Temple's voice was not raised and she had not stirred from where she stood.

"Why is Shubael beaten because he loves his friends, and what have I to do with your brother that you talk of my releasing him? 'Tis I would be

released from his ill-thought-of importunities. 'Tis his vanity suffers—not himself. He will soon forget me. What could I do more than I have done?"

"Thou speak'st as if thou hadst known him long. Where was't he saw thee first?" demanded the sister. "He says he knew thee well long since and thou wast greatly taken up with him. I've told him thou wilt none of him. Temple Armitage holdeth herself for higher game—though for that, the family of Nicolas Verring is no richer and no honester than his——"

Beulah's voice had risen to the scolding note of her mother's.

The flash in Temple's eyes darkened and from her full height she looked down upon the hysterical girl who was venting the stored-up poison of her brooding malice.

"You forget that the door is open, Beulah. I would not have Madam Chanterell judge you by such words. For your brother, I will avoid your house and make it plainer, if that be possible, that I do not desire his company. Nor do I see why your brother's folly should give you the right to insult or rail at me."

There was a strength in her directness, in the dignity of her carefully curbed anger, in her evident repulsion for a scene, that had its effect. Beulah's tight lips sneered, the hectic colour burned more brightly on her cheeks, but she spoke in lower tones.

"Then you will not release him?" she persisted. "Nor Shubael?"

"What do you mean?" Temple looked at her

with frank amazement, her anger yielding to the fear that the girl was crazed. "What more can I do? 'Tis not in my power to control your brother's mind."

"It is—you know it is—you are a witch! All men say you are a witch, even Sir Humphrey Wildglass. 'Tis Satan gives you power. You have taken Jacob and Shubael and made my home a hell of strife and quarrelling, and now you have taken Roger—— Only the Devil himself could have taken him from me. He has belonged to me all his life—and I cannot live without him—I loved him long before you ever saw him—— He is mine——" The spotted cheeks, the furious passion in eyes that were no more alive at most times than blue yarn, was painful to see, like the death agony of some gay-winged insect, writhing and gleaming brighter for the sun on its misery. "He will be mine if thou'lt release him—— Let him go! When thou'rt hanged on Gallows Hill then thou'lt have to let him go. O, let him go and I'll plead with them not to hang thee——"

She put out her hands but Temple drew herself taller, her face grown white, her straight gaze fixed upon the working features, as if she tried in vain to see the plump and helpless creature whose dependence had roused her tenderness.

Beulah retreated from the gaze and flung herself into a chair, sobbing pitiably upon the arm.

Temple moved to the window and her eyes wandered to the asters bending with stiff reluctance in the wind. Twice she turned as if to ask a question and each time closed her lips more firmly. The

fire crackled, and scudding clouds blew across the sun. The leaves whirled up and fell disconsolate.

"O, Temple, pity me. I am so wretched—I shall die—I don't know what to do—I shall die."

The scolding voice was broken into hopeless, childish weeping. Beulah had crossed the space between them and sat upon the window cushions, clinging about the straight figure that now watched the sky.

The fine hand was again laid gently upon the bowed head, but with a difference.

"Bathe your eyes, Beulah, and weep no more. Come," the Maid said quietly. But the colour had not returned to her cheeks.

After Beulah had gone, she went back to her room and threw wide every window. The wind whirled through in a mighty draught and sent her treasures rattling upon the floor. Then she looked down upon the flowers vaguely, drawing the clean air deep, as if she could never be cleansed of the past hour.

A figure upright, moving with the happy strength of those who are afraid of nothing because hope has bucklered them, passed on the other side of the way and glanced up quickly to the open windows.

The Maid's eyes dilated suddenly and she clasped her hand close upon her throat.

She uttered no sound, but after a little, closed the windows once more and set about restoring the fallen knick-knacks. When Sir Humphrey came she was smiling and gracious, but once, when he was speaking in a strain bolder than ever before, he found she was not listening, and setting himself to

woo her strayed attention with a song, he watched covertly, and saw the look that settled on her face, a look lonely, full of a desolate amaze.

But the look was gone when the song was ended, and watch her as he might he found no place where her finely tempered distance was vulnerable to praise or sympathy.

"Thy pride will be less stiff when the gallows waits thee, Mistress," he said softly to himself. "'Tis question which were sweeter, conquest or revenge—let the event decide."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE PEST

THE Governor's horses pranced and curvetted in a manner to make proud the heart of Nopomuk, clad in new livery, and driving Lady Phips and Mistress Armitage to Daniel Henchman's book shop by the Town House.

Lady Phips was puzzled by the girl, who kept the talk resolutely away from everyone but the Governor and refused the carriage further than the door of the low building where Mr. Mather's pamphlets and a small store of more secular treasures tempted the purse of the bookish.

There was a light snow in the streets and the ground was frozen. As they alighted a figure clothed with a painstaking regard for fashion emerged from the Blue Anchor and made haste to intercept them. Lady Phips extended her hand distantly and Jacob Munch bowed over it with too elaborate an air.

"Come to see me soon again, Mistress Armitage. It comforts me, my dear, to talk of my anxiety."

The Governor's wife spoke affectionately, dismissing the young man by a careful ignoring of his presence.

Temple answered the words with a look that lingered many days in Lady Phips's memory.

"I will come—gladly," she said, bowed gravely

and finally to Jacob, smiled again at the elder woman, and turned away to walk swiftly toward her home.

Jacob Munch was quickly beside her.

"You are not good at remembering old friends, Mistress," he began as he overtook her.

"I have few friends in Boston save her I have just left," answered the girl. The coldness of her tone was edged with a decision that roused his ire.

"Why do you flout me?" He attacked her angrily. "Is't not enough you must belittle me to my sister that you also put affront upon me in the streets!"

"It seemeth not, Sir. Your vanity presumes." She would have passed him, but he was obstinate.

"You'd not hold me so cheap belike," he retorted with an ugly threat in his oafish face, "were I to make the town a wasp nest for your friend the Governor!" Then, as she looked at him more coldly still, "Sir William be none too well liked now. 'Twould make a fine tale, that of the *Araby Rose*—the witch's oath and the compact with the Devil! You thought I didn't know you for the Little Maid—but I found you out." He paused for breath, barricading her way with his heavy bulk. "Come now, Mistress, make a bargain with me," he went on. "Wouldst have me spare the Governor?" He approached nearer, his eyes gloating upon her eagerly.

"I bargain not with such as thou. Governor Phips needs no coward's 'sparing'!" They had stopped before the pewterer's door, and the girl moved toward it as she spoke.

"Thou art the coward—eh, Mistress? 'Tis the contagion thou'rt fearing," he called after her. "But I'm not with Beulah. I go not near the girl —the zany to get the pest and set us all in danger!"

"What is that?" Temple turned to him peremptorily. "Is your sister ill? Who careth for her?"

"Aye—thou'rt curious now—all women alike are——"

The Maid interrupted. "Tell me what is the matter," she insisted sharply.

"Beulah hath gotten the smallpox," he answered, "and lieth sick at home. 'Twill cost her her pink cheeks most like. For care—she getteth precious little! Nurse Quail refuseth to come and Mam hath small time to spare from praying and weeping. Some of the congregation be met within her chamber now to pray for her."

"Beulah's? They pray in the sick girl's chamber?" Temple's voice showed her indignant wonder.

"Aye—have they no praying for the sick among thy——" Jacob waited, seeing she had not heeded him. She was inclining her head with courtesy remote and quiet. He had not marked who was passing behind him, and Roger Verring, after a half-perceptible pause, had replaced the tri-cornered beaver and gone his way. The Maid's eyes had rested briefly upon him as he went. His very manner of wearing a cloak was pleasing and made the King's officers look tawdry as they met him.

One of the red-coated swaggerers spent on her a killing glance, sauntering too near as he came by,

but hastened on indifferent, as he felt her unregarding glance that plainly saw him not.

"Come now—art a 'mazing beauty, if thou be'st a witch! Think better on't, Mistress." Jacob's elaborate courtesy had dwindled to a miserable naturalness. He was grossly vulnerable to the attitude that unconsciously ignored him. It loosed a vile and wordy tongue, made more fluent by the sight of Roger, whom he had at last perceived. "'Tis well for thee! Prefer the hangman an' thou wilt! Thou'lt not be so ready to spit on men of substance with thy pretty neck in his halter. I would have saved thee——"

One who came toward them swerved from the path, gazing with bulging eyes upon the Maid as he went by. Jacob talked rapidly, attempting to get closer.

"I can save thee yet—— What say'st thou——"

A flash of swift repulsion and command drove him back a pace, the involuntary flight of the bully. She turned slowly, neither speaking nor looking to see if he followed, and opened the pewterer's door.

When she came out Jacob was standing again at the threshold of the Blue Anchor Tavern.

"Come, get thee home, Jacob Munch. 'Tis grief for thy sister would make thee careless. Hast had enough," Mr. Monck was saying paternally.

"Thou'rt right, Neighbour Monck." A cunning intelligence came to the rescue of the dull rage in Jacob's face. "I have been much——" He hesitated for a word and went on glibly, omitting it—"by Beulah's sickness." He raised his hat with an unpuritan flourish and set it back less exactly than

was his wont, moving off aimlessly toward the Town House.

"A fine young man! No wonder if he be upset. 'Tis shame the pest should seize a maid so comely. A man bears better with a pitted face," and the host of the Blue Anchor went back to his tasks, compressing his lips with amiable regret.

The snow was falling once more in fine and clustered flakes that clung damply upon the garments of the wayfarers.

Temple moved forward among the flurries without haste. Her face was set thoughtfully in a look whose wider meaning Roger might perhaps have guessed, but even love could not have unriddled the cause of its underlying pain. Into a life lonely and deep-entrenched in long reserve she had admitted the resistless presence of a comradeship that seemed to come of right. Barring it out had left her doubly solitary. But what sign of pain or inward wretchedness her look betrayed, it was gone when she came to the gate before the house of Christopher Munch.

Here she stopped, gazed upward at the shaded windows, and stood an instant with her hand upon the post. Then she walked quietly up the path and raised the knocker, beating it softly upon the iron knob that took the blow.

The long ribbons that tied her bonnet blew about her shoulders, but the wide brim lined with yellow silk—quilled like flower petals within the flare—was trimly set upon the dark hair, and the fringed mantle lay straightly on her shoulders. None came in answer to her knocking. She waited till she had

summoned the household thrice, then lifted the latch and went in with hard-taken resolution. The smell of burning rags and vinegar filled the lower rooms, that showed a dusty confusion through the open doors.

Temple paused at the foot of the stair, and coming back to the pegs in the low hall, took off her hat and mantle and hung them up. There was a loud sound above that soared and sank continuous and melancholy. As she climbed, words of prayer and exhortation came to her with a noise of hysterical crying, and then a querulous voice that incessantly complained.

"Go away—please go away. Oh, make them go away." The voice grew more shrill, and broke into a moan. "Some water! I would drink—— Mam, make them go away—I want water—Shubael —Shubael get me some water. Shubael will get some. Don't ask Jacob. He never'll do aught I ask." The praying voice rose louder, drowning the sick girl's cries. The weeping grew more hysterical.

"And if it be Thy dread will, O Thou Awful and Almighty God, Omnipotent and Omnipresent Judge, Arbiter of this our mortal Destiny, that this maid, thy creature, soon be brought before Thy Judgment Seat——"

"Make them go away—Mother——" The scream pierced like the scream of a child fallen in deep water. Temple was in the open doorway from which the odours of the sick room welled repellant, and her voice answered the cry in words clear and soothing.

The sick girl sitting up, unrecognizable and loath-

some, in the hollow of the mammoth featherbed that billowed about her neath a twisted mass of quilts, held out her burning hands with another cry.

"Temple—Temple Armitage—make them go away——"

"Silence, girl. Lie thou still while we supplicate the Throne of Grace." The two men who stood with folded palms at the bed's foot, moved nearer. The girl shrieked and fell back upon her hot pillows, moaning again. Tears trickled under her puffed lids and ran upon the disfigured cheeks.

"Temple—they are come to take me to the Devil. Make them—ah——"

The man of the loud voice was drawing nearer still. Beulah crawled farther from him, writhing in delirious fear.

Temple leaned above the pitiful figure, her arms about the burning shoulders.

"Go!" she said sternly to the men. "You are making her worse. And you, Mistress Munch, bring me water from the well."

Mistress Munch ceased, from sheer surprise, her loud weeping. The men looked upon Temple with the ire of an offended rage, and waited dumbfounded at her temerity.

"Go!" the Maid repeated. "You've done harm enough already." There was authority in her tone that carried inexplicable weight. They retreated from the bed, and regarded the two girls solemnly.

"Beware, Mistress!" He of the loud voice raised his hand as if to pronounce a curse. "You send forth the servants of the Lord. Beware lest He also withdraw his countenance."

"You can pray elsewhere," answered the girl firmly. "Nor did I ever hear that faith and works might not both be pleasing to God."

"False—Mistress 'tis——"

"Can you not see you make her worse. Go—— Please, Sirs, go now," she commanded unshaken, and they went, driven, as both bore witness, recounting their discomfiture, by something none could describe in her eyes, and in her voice which though low would make a man to quake for fear.

Beulah was moaning and mumbling, her parched lips open, her unsightly arms still clinging.

Mistress Munch had shown her visitors ceremoniously from the house before she brought the water.

"I fear 'twill kill her. Were it not better she have the Burgundy?" wailed the woman helplessly. "Oh, that I should be so afflicted—and Beulah such a beauty—and now none knoweth but she may be hideous, if she live at all——" Temple took the water, silencing the shrill tongue. Beulah had shuddered, seeming to understand.

"We are going to keep ward so carefully that she shall have no scars. Now she must rest." Temple spoke distinctly and Beulah looked through her swollen lids, listening.

"When had she water last?" asked the Maid as the sick girl drank thirstily.

"I gave her a wineglass yestere'en, though 'twas against wisdom," Mistress Munch answered, wailing again.

"You are greatly wearied," Temple said soothingly. "Go now and sleep. You can trust me with Beulah."

"Are you wonted to sickness?" The woman paused fussily, wiping her eyes,

"You can trust me. Pray go. You have need of rest," Temple persisted.

"That I do sorely. Two nights alone, with Christopher afraid, and Shubael sent for safety to his aunt—and even the neighbours shy of us." The woman wept afresh.

After she had gone Temple straightened the bed with a firm smoothing of its chaos, drew the linen above the quilts so only its smooth surface should touch the sick girl's flesh, and opened two windows, one on either side, letting the breeze sweep through and cleanse the air.

Then with a ewer of mottled porcelain half filled with water, upon a chair beside her, she drew a cambric handkerchief from the silk bag that swung by ribbons at her side, and softly bathed the fevered face and arms.

She could hear Mistress Munch below going noisily about her household duties, heartened by the finding of another's shoulders to take her burden.

At last the sick girl slept, mingling her heavy breath with the chill air and in her sleep putting up restless arms to touch her face. Temple watched, putting them back before they could do harm, and finally laying one hand on the crossed wrists to keep them still. The light darkened; even beyond

the window whose shade she had raised a gloomy sky made a dun background.

It was all lifeless, all dark, and full of ugly shadows. The girl's eyes grew large and mournful, and then the lips that could smile as could no others set themselves in the close curve of hard endurance.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### A PASTORAL CALL

THE sun rioted upon the clean surface of the snow, and the still air brought the cheerful sound of creaking sledges.

Mr. Cotton Mather paused at the door of his house and drew on his minkskin gloves. From the peak of his sombre hat to his high boots of well-dyed leather there was no note but black. Even his linen bands were hid by the black cloak.

"Father—Sir!"

Behind him in the open doorway stood a round-cheeked little girl, with tears still flowing over flushed cheeks and lips convulsed with sobs. She was bare-armed and bare-necked save for a tiny, short-sleeved open jacket of thin cashmere that partly hid the naked shoulders.

The clergyman turned at the cry.

"What is it, daughter?" he asked not unkindly, but with a sober heaviness that seemed to intimidate the wee creature. She shook her head, her frightened eyes on his face.

The young man, already old in authority and in family cares, and weighted with a store of learning that had taken all his laborious childhood and ardent youth, finished fastening his glove and bent down to the shaking little figure on the sill.

"What is it, Katy?" he asked again. "Thou wilt tell father what oppresseth thy conscience."

"Will—will the Devil—take me, if I be never naughty again, and never move about when thou prayest?"

The terrified voice was low. The eyes drowned in a fresh overflow.

"Nay, an' thou be a good Katy and pray often for forgiveness for thy sinning and be obedient, then canst thou ask God to keep thee from the Devil. But he watcheth very close. How old art thou, Katharine?"

"Free years old, and free monfs more," answered Katy, one chubby hand holding to the paternal finger.

"A big girl already, seest thou? And if thou be good 'twill be easier for thy little sister to praise God in her obedience and her piety. Even now, my child, though she cannot talk, she keepeth an eye on all thou dost. Is't not so."

"Yes; when I hurt my finger and cwied out she cwied too—— Thou wilt not let the Devil get me?" The anxious eyes had not let go their hold.

"Thy father prayeth daily that Katy may be among God's elect, and thou must pray, and serve the Lord with diligence. Hasten now and make thy petitions again in father's study, and run quickly for it is too cold for thee here."

He would have gone, but the child still clung to the minkskin glove, her small frame quivering.

"I will—therve the Lord," she said, and the spiritual autocrat of the North Church hid a moisture in his own easily wet eyes on the close-cropped head and kissed her with rare indulgence, smiling

as the little feet clattered through the cold hall behind him.

But as he journeyed in the snow-trodden street, returning the salutations of the elders and acknowledging with lordly nods the "manners" of the awed and tongue-tied children, his features set themselves in their hardest mould of judicial and divinely licensed anger.

More than one interested gaze was fixed upon him as he entered the gate of the Widow Pullen's house and moved with a step of conscious solemnity toward the door.

The knocker resounded thunderously. While he waited, Mr. Mather looked doubtfully upon a mass of green boughs heaped upon the snow at the side of the well-cleared path.

"Thy master hath procured these for the banking of the house against the cold?" he demanded of the maid who responded to his knock.

"Nay, Sir," she answered, curtseying. "They be Christmas greens, Sir——but a poor Christmas 'twill be in this heathenish new world with shops to be all open and no waits to sing a carol!" She curtseyed again, expecting praise from the dignitary whose garb was plainly clerical.

"Curb thy ignorant tongue, woman, and cease lamenting the vain tricks of Popish days. Thou art, I fear me, but dangerously placed!"

The maid looked at him, bewildered, missing his point spite of the weighty delivery of his words.

"Thank'ee, Sir," she answered, curtseying again. "But we keep the day here, as faithfully and merry as in Devon, Sir. None of they non-'formists shall

be suffered to make no difference here. Who shall I say you would see, Sir?"

Waftures of spicy cookery pervaded the apartment which Mr. Mather surveyed, pleasant hints of the rows of toothsome dishes, hot from the brick oven, that were set to cool upon the white-scoured table of the kitchen. The entrance to the Widow Pullen's house, like that of Nicolas Verring, gave upon a great room from which the stairs ascended.

The clergyman regarded the costly furnishings, a natural curiosity mixed with stern reprehension. The furniture of the place had been so added to and overpowered by the richer garnishings come with Sir John from England that it bore no resemblance to its earlier state. The tables inlaid with ivory and mother of pearl, the rich stuffs that cushioned the window-seats, and the chairs brought from light-minded France and ministering with seduction to the eye, strange ornaments upon the mantel resembling the pagan gods, even the pictured tapestries, revolted him.

"Tell Mistress Armitage," he commanded, as an oriental potentate might summon a subject to his footstool, "that I would speak with her."

"I will see if Mistress Armitage be receiving. Pray, Sir, come this way. Who shall I say——" began the woman again, looping a brocaded curtain from the arch Sir John had constructed between this living room and the long parlor beyond.

"I am here, Betty, and I will see Mr. Mather." Mistress Armitage rose from the window niche where she had been fashioning wreaths and crosses from fir twigs and ground pine, and the minister, wheeling at her voice with somewhat less of despotic

stiffness, bowed low before he was aware, rendering involuntarily the homage he would have exacted.

Behind her on the diamond-paned window was darkly outlined a wreath upon a cross, the warmth of evergreen livening and comforting the cold December day. Temple had been happier in her work than in anything that had occupied her in the weeks just past, and the look of Christmas cheer was not wholly lacking from her face, grown paler in the days of nursing.

Her arms and neck were covered with sleeves and tucker of firm-patterned lace, and shoulder knots, warm with the colour of red roses, clung soft and homelike upon the foreign web. Her full skirt, slashed from hem to pointed bodice, flowed backward upon the smooth sheen of the petticoat in whose ivory folds a carmine flush came and went as she moved, and the tasselled girdle of silk cord swung upon the cream and rose-red of her draperies. Every line gave grace and height to the stateliness already hers.

"Madam Chanterell is indisposed and Sir John Winchcombe is from home," she added as she led him beneath the curtains into the more imposing room on their farther side.

For once in many years of ready sovreignty the man followed and was still.

Betty stirred the coals and replenished the fire with a forestick that flamed and snapped genial defiance to the sour displeasure of the visitor's look.

He stood in the middle of the floor as the woman departed, somewhat less imposing divested of his cloak that Betty had carried with her, but suffi-

ciently alarming to have awed the maidens of his congregation into trembling anxiousness.

Still he was silent, and it would have seemed to the astute that the denunciation of his manner found a less easy utterance in speech.

"I pray you, be seated, Mr. Mather."

The girl stood graciously waiting while her guest rapped sharply with his knuckles upon a prayer book that lay upon a polished shelf.

"Whose is this?" he inquired harshly.

"It was my mother's," Temple answered. She had winced at the blows and there was a glow in the dark eyes, less than ever meek as she watched his movements.

" 'Tis unmeet such books of vain and fond repetitions be brought to this new colony where we be striving to obey the Scripture pure and undefiled. It soweth error among those who would fain be left in freedom to worship God."

"And cannot the men of the new world be free while there be any who worship not after their manner?" asked the girl.

Mr. Mather had seated himself reluctantly, feeling a greater ease in his task while he stood, and he drew off slowly the mink gloves furred within, revealing his tapered fingers adorned with funeral rings.

"I fear, Mistress, thy contumacy listens not to the wisdom of thy elders," he replied with cold formality, laying the gloves upon a table. "None may worship in true peace when error aboundeth in the midst. What doest thou with papistical signs and gauds hung within thy windows?"

The girl sat down, with a soft rustle of her silken folds, upon a straight chair opposite, and returned

his dictatorial question with a look of great surprise.

"Is not the cross everywhere a Christian symbol?" she asked. "Surely it is set plainly in every door in Boston mansions, and I had supposed it was for a sign of the Christian household within."

Mr. Mather turned involuntarily to the only door visible within the room, one that led to a closet beside the lofty mantel, and there, as the Maid had said, was the raised cross with sunken panels between.

" 'Twas never intended for a sign, Mistress. At least, were such the folly of builders of older days 'tis unconsciously perpetuated in this colony. It should be looked to." He glanced uneasily a second time at the door. "So with sly and cunning disguise doth Satan come among us, mingling like an evil odour that pervadeth the good air, in our most common deeds. Vigilance—there is no hope for us but in a more strenuous and fervent watch. And that, Mistress"—he leaned forward, his eyes starting with a fixed and glassy concentration—"is wherefore I am come, to warn, to command thee to desist."

For the girl whose blood flowed wholesomely and steadied her nerves for joy or for endurance, so that the spirit mastered the flesh in a sound and noble restraint, this man whose solemnity was shaken by the force of so great excitement seemed beside himself, his words the irresponsible ramblings of disease. For an instant that thought showed in the astonished compassion with which she contemplated him. But as he sat before her in the black

raiment of his office, the aggressive embodiment of that jurisdiction beneath which her life had fallen, his power was too solid, too real, for compassion.

She said nothing, waiting for some explanation of the attack. He, too, waited, expecting a different effect to follow his dolorously weighted phrases.

"What hast thou to say?" He kept his eyes upon her as if believing the gaze would overwhelm her calmness.

"In what have we offended? If these greens transgress the law, pray lay the matter before Sir John Winchcombe."

"Thy Master gives thee a tongue quick in skilled evasion, Mistress," he answered angrily, "but 'twill not avail. Know'st thou not that the God of Israel is greater than Him thou servest and will utterly confound Him in the Great Day? Repent, repent, and confess, ere His anger blast thee utterly."

"Who gives to you authority to invade the house of an English gentleman and assail those beneath his care with vague and unmanly taunts?" the girl asked with sudden resentment. "If there be that in our worship or our conduct that likes you not, Sir, pray lay the matter before Sir John Winchcombe that he may know how tyrannous is the spying policy of these new colonies. Madam Chanterell would thank you—— And if this Christmas greenery disturb you 'tis to Sir John you should appeal."

"I speak not of Sir John, nor will thy lying tongue avail," he broke in with mounting wrath. "My business is with thee, to cast out the Devil from thy body and bring thee to confession." He

lifted the stick he had retained and struck it upon the floor in an authoritative blow.

The girl looked at him undaunted, wondering at the outbreak. Her innate distaste for emotion publicly displayed showing in a quieter reserve in her replies.

"Your violence is without warrant, Sir," she said coldly. "Even were I your parishioner I could not listen further."

"Girl—thou triest my patience beyond the bounds. Were it not that I remember 'tis but the Devil speaking with thy false lips I could chastise thy ready insolence."

The Maid rose with unhurried dignity and spoke with intense deliberation, looking down upon him steadily. Her colour was warmer and she took her breath somewhat more deeply, but her voice was low, and not less rich and full.

"Patience, Sir, seems most demanded of them you would affright. Such freedom as yours is a false coin, with slavery for its reverse."

"Beware, Mistress,—I tell thee! I am come in the place of the God thy crimes offend!" Mr Mather rolled forth his words loudly.

"Then do I know you are come taking a Holy Name in vain; for His servants bring peace and good-will on Christmas Eve, not anger and dissension." The girl seemed to grow taller, holding herself regally at her full height, and her words grave, and beautiful in their utterance, held him silent till she had finished.

He also rose.

"Thou hast a devil," he repeated, his voice

quivering with the fury of his seeming impotence. "Thou art possessed!"

She passed onward toward the curtains with the slight motion of chill dismissal.

"I will bid Betty attend you, Sir," she had said, when he sprang in unclerical haste to intercept her, putting out his hand to seize her arm.

"Go at thy peril," he panted. "Thou art accursed, but I would save thee by thy confession if thou be not damned already. I give thee this one chance further, to own thy crimes and seek repentance."

The girl had not hastened her going for his sudden movement, but he withdrew his hand quickly at her look, before it touched her. The outer door opened and closed vehemently.

"A pest on the cold—ugh!" groaned a voice beyond the archway. "Betty—Betty, I say! Curse the woman! Betty!"

"Will you go now or shall I ask Sir John's permission to leave you?" asked the Maid, still quietly.

"Sir John will not succour a witch," he retorted confidently. "Not even thy Master can save thee for there is One Greater——"

"A witch—you believe in good faith that I—am a witch?" She interrupted him, transfixed. "You must be mad," she added in a tone hardly audible.

Mr. Mather's features shone with a fierce exultation. The girl had grown white at his word.

"If you believe this dreadful charge, you should have proof," she said after a pause. "Why should you fix on me to be a witch?"

The horror and sincerity of her recoil, in some

degree modified the fierceness of her accuser. He watched, puzzled and alert, replying with solemn volubility.

"There be many proofs. You turned from the sick bed of a daughter of the faith them who prayed for her recovery, making mock of their prayers, and when you had driven them forth you used some evil power to restore the maid, who lay already at the portal of death appointed of her Maker. What say you to that?"

"That it is false," the girl cried, "as only tales are false that bear a little truth. Will you listen to me, and hear me candidly as you would wish justice for yourself? You bring against me a grave charge of the most horrid crime. You accuse me that I am of those who have sold themselves to Satan and must work his cruel will. And if that charge be believed it will cost me my life. Is this not so?"

"'Tis for that I came. If thou confess——" he leaned toward her greedily.

"To confess what is not true were itself a crime," she answered. "Shall I tell you that which is the truth?"

"Speak. If thou liest, Mistress, thou but sink'st thyself deeper in the abyss." He sent forth his periods as from the pulpit's altitude.

She lifted her hand as if his words troubled her like a persistent insect, but he had ceased, prepared to listen, his manner hostile, steeled against the subtlety of the Fiend.

"I asked those who prayed by Beulah Munch to go and pray for her elsewhere because she was delirious and was made worse by the confusion in the

chamber. She cried out continually, begging them to go." Temple rested her eyes on him, waiting to see if he would believe. Even at peril of her life it went hard with her to plead for herself to this man, whose language had so offended.

"But how couldst thou cure her?" he began, gloomily determined.

"By God's help," she interrupted clearly. "I prayed ever as I worked that I might save the child—who had suffered much—and He heard me."

"And the scars—she shows no scars."

"I watched her even when she slept, and while I was not by, Mistress Munch kept guard. Save for her arms, where she did herself harm when Mistress Munch, being tired, fell once asleep, she hath no sign of the disease." There was a certain contentment in the tone in which she spoke. Beulah's joy at her recovered prettiness had been the sole reward of painful days.

"Could I pray for aid in that which was accursed," the Maid went on, "or call on God to help me, speaking His Name to you if I were what you say?"

"Sometimes the Fiend is cunning, and seemeth pious," he answered. "What of Shubael, Mistress, whom they say thou hast afflicted so that he weeps to see thee and even when he is beaten doth not desist?"

"'Tis cruel." The girl clasped her hands restlessly. "I can do nothing and 'tis not my fault, save that I liked the little lad and was kind to him. He hath a warm heart and few have time to talk and play with him. I know not why Mistress Munch—mayhap *she* thinks I am a witch!" She

looked at Mr. Mather quickly. "Of course—'tis that—and Jacob—he——"

"What of Jacob? Him, too, thou hast afflicted."

"Nay—hear me, Mr. Mather. Why should I wish them harm. Master Munch hath no affliction save that I preferred his sister to himself and so angered him. He makes much of little. But for Shubael, the child grieves and I dare not go to see him and be friendly with the lad because then he is punished. You have known children—'tis said your own do love you greatly—you know how a small thing may grieve their tenderness."

Mr. Mather shook his head soberly. She had shown an agitation that brought her more within his ken. His judicial rages came from the warmth of his imagination and not like the Lieutenant-Governor's from an icy determination unmoved by feeling. The force of her perfect honesty had struck in a measure conviction to his feelings.

"Why should you interfere in the care of one stricken with the pest?" he asked still sternly. "What was thy motive?"

"The motive Our Lord Christ gave us," she answered. "Surely I need not give motives to a priest of God, for caring for the sick. What evil wish could I have had in such a task?"

"To gain her soul for Hell." Mr. Mather grew hectic once more, regarding her with renewed distrust. "And only a witch could trust her beauty where it might perish of the same destruction," he added.

"And is not God as powerful as the Devil to protect His own?" The girl did not waver. The

reticent faith that had grown, unconscious and without observation in her solitary life, expressed itself for the first time in her words.

"These be not the only charges brought against thee, Mistress. And 'twas an error graviminous and weighty to drive from their supplications before the Heavenly Throne those who were bent on an errand of mercy. The land is groaning and travailing in a horrid agony. I have seen many times the marks of the burning and of the pincers and claws that tear the flesh of the sufferers in this hellish visitation. Mistress Epps lieth speechless and her face is pulled in awful twitchings that cause her to writhe helplessly upon her bed. She was much easier after that I prayed with her, as I assured her that she would be. I have hope under God's grace to drive forth the evil spirit altogether." He made a complacent pause. "It is an evil hour when they who serve in Zion must gird upon them the armour of their faith and do battle with an Awful Foe. We would not willingly make wrongful accusation. Canst thou truly clear thyself from this most Terrible Charge? Canst thou prove that thou hast ne'er had dealings with Sathanas, nor tortured any, nor betrayed thy soul to be a servant of the Devil?"

"Have I not proved it?" The girl's earnestness grew more profound.

"Thou hast not the manner of those condemned. But there are many wiles; the Devil bringeth his most secret and powerful subtleties to war with the elect." Mr. Mather walked up and down, pacing the distance from door to window, and returning to the Maid in a tense abstraction.

"But if he so hate the elect how should he not show it in his servants at the presence of them vowed to his destruction? Do you feel any horror, any sense of the Devil's presence in me?" the Maid asked with firm assurance.

Mr. Mather paused, regarding her once more and with a less hostile determination.

"It hath oft been proved the Devil cannot abide *my* presence but will set on the afflicted to strike or injure me, although none may harm me; they are arrested in the very attempt." He considered doubtfully.

The Maid looked at him with a faint smile more sad than her sober watching.

"Will you take my hand, Mr. Mather, that I may show you how little I fear the presence of God's people?"

He waited briefly, gazing upon her face with eyes grown more sane and more discerning, and then with evident wondering at his own faith, he took the outstretched hand into his cold and nervous grasp.

When his early supper was over and Mr. Mather was locked behind the massive door of his study, he busied himself for a long time above a basin that held some strong and aromatic liquid, plunging his hands within and rubbing them with energy upon a linen napkin fetched from the table. Often he held up his right hand to the light and looked at it with horror. And finally he knelt, and rocking to and fro, prayed aloud, pouring out his petition in flooding words that might have drowned the very gates of Heaven.

## CHAPTER XXV

### CHRISTMAS EVE: THE WAY PAST THE INN

OPPOSITE the Widow Pullen's house Roger paced up and down, scattering the snow with his high boots and holding his cloak against the wind that tore in a shrieking frenzy across the exposed peninsula.

A light burned in Temple's room and an extravagant glow streamed from the windows of the lower floor. Twice in the four days since her return from the home of Christopher Munch the Maid had refused to see him and, smarting beneath her sudden coldness, he waited, striving to compass a way to solve the mystery of the change. That she had turned from him was due, it might be, to Sir Humphrey.

His pride was powerfully at war with an undefined anxiety, that added to the jealous anger and brought his thoughts back to something new, not wholly understood, in the girl's face. Had she heard the senseless rumours of witchcraft that wandered here and there, meaningless and stupid as the vulgar minds that had conceived the thought?

He drew his hat low over his eyes and let the wind have its way. Upon the white-curtained windows of the Maid's room no shadow was revealed, but below he saw Betty busied about the table and the portly figure of Sir John rising stiffly

to reach a pipe above the mantle; then he moved away suddenly and set himself against the wind, walking faster toward the Common. When he returned, another figure, breasting the storm with a hopeful stride, was approaching from the opposite direction. It stopped before the gate and slipped the latch, pushing the bars against the drifted snow and hastening forward to the door. It was Sir Humphrey.

Betty admitted him with a smiling face and shortly ascended the stairs, returning alone to close and lock the shutters. The light still burned in the Maid's room. Had she descended? A foolish question! She would be coming radiant to greet the cavalier and hear the music of his violin. Upon the wailing of the wind it came already, heard now and then in speaking cadences that sent Roger's blood back upon its course in the fierce pressure of a world-old misery.

Within, Sir John, huddled over the fire, was listening with a frown. Betty, bearer of the Maid's excuses, had tripped forth after they had been delivered, with a final admiring glance at Sir Humphrey's back. Madam stitched with fluttering fingers at her embroidery frame, pausing often to ask, "Art better, Brother," and be growled at with vigorous denial.

"Thou playest like a master. I know a good player, but, damme, Sir Humphrey, if aught can pleasure a man when the fiends be after him like this. A black pest on their chilly Boston! 'Tis naught but an Æolus cave for winds and damp!"

The cavalier laid the viol upon a stool and crossed to the hearth, a certain unwonted agitation in his movements. He looked at the sufferer, appeared about to speak, and, turning away, studied the flames in silence.

"What is it? What are ye all keeping from me? Seest thou death in my face?" Sir John asked querulously. "Try not to deceive me. My sister too hath something on her mind. Speak, Amanda —and cease looking at Sir Humphrey as if ye had a secret between ye."

The woman dropped her embroidery frame upon her lap.

"Thou art not thyself." She answered in a troubled voice. "He is suffering great pain, Sir Humphrey."

"'Tis of that pain I am thinking." Sir Humphrey turned squarely around facing the room, his brows drawn even more anxiously than the woman's. "'Tis plain he suffers. Hast ever had aught like it before, Sir John."

"Nay—naught so miserable." Sir John looked up, startled, and huddled again with a groan above the flame. His features shone repulsively from his excessive potations and the heat he courted. "'Tis as if a fiend were on my chest that ran red-hot needles beneath the flesh."

Madam Chanterell looked at him nervously. Sir Humphrey shook his head and paced up and down, his silence gathering meaning as it was prolonged.

"What is it—— What is it, Sir Humphrey Wildglass? 'Tis a devilish trick to torture me with hintings. Speak. Think'st thou I am bewitched?"

Sir John's voice put the query huskily. Fear made his heavy face alive.

Madam Chanterell dropped her frame and it rolled upon the floor dragging its weight of whitened linen and silk skeins to lie unregarded beneath the table.

"'Tis too delicate—for a stranger." Sir Humphrey's tones broke slightly. "What use to interfere—but seeing such suffering——" He bit his lip and stopped abruptly, as if eager to avoid further talk. "I will go now, Sir John. Command me if——" He stopped again.

"'Go now'——Tell me—whom dost thou suspect? Who would so torture me? Speak! 'Tis no time for silence." Sir John groaned again as he twisted in his chair. "I cannot long endure it," he gasped, purpling with the increasing violence of each twinge.

"Do not go, Sir Humphrey. Pray counsel us." The sister rose, her solid figure trembling.

Sir Humphrey paused and swept a pitying glance from her to the figure in the chair.

"I cannot counsel you. My feelings—— Ask some other," he ended suddenly. "I am not fit."

"I knew 'twas that! You pity her." Sir John Winchcombe tried to rise and fell back lumberingly. "I heard it in the streets. 'Twas common talk at Monck's. 'Tis Frances." Sir Humphrey's eyes that were averted as if in grief flashed at the word. "Why didst thou bring her, Manda?" Sir John's voice grew more shrill. "She was never of us—she was always strange. Why didst thou——"

"'Twas thou insisted, thou and Richard Amory. She liked it not," put in his sister quickly.

"And now I am tormented for revenge." The man moaned and rumbled in a sound of miserable terror.

"I do not believe it. Thou wilt be better in the morning." Madam Chanterell spoke out with some fierceness.

Sir Humphrey glanced at her pityingly still, and again looked away.

"Better!" Sir John cried out hoarser and more angrily affrighted. "Better! The Devil take thee! Nay I mean not that," he added hastily. "But I'm like to die before I'm better. She teareth my very vitals from me—who else could it be?"

"She hath been ever kind and thoughtful for thee. 'Twas for that I liked her. Think, Brother. Wilt believe these canting Puritans?"

"Aye—let me die! Wait till thou art tormented. —Who is it, an it be not her! Sir Humphrey believes—— Speak, Sir Humphrey—— I would not credit it till I had seen 'twas his conviction. I chastised the lout at the Blue Anchor that dared accuse her and pommelled him till the sweat ran on my body, and even as I came into the air these pincers began pulling at my flesh—— Speak, Sir Humphrey——"

"What can I say, Sir John? 'Tis not for me to say aught concerning a household where——". The cavalier paused in embarrassment.

"Aye—there's the disgrace! A witch beneath my roof! I'll turn her out this night! Betty—Betty, I say——" he roared, angry fear conquering the hoarseness.

Temple, above, thought it was but the repetition

of his drunken humour when the liquor fastened on his brain. She had been seated long before her dressing case but not once had she raised her gaze to the mirror. It was upon the miniatures she had shown to Roger in the woods. As she looked, her eyes filled with tears; and her hands, that closed the spring, and tucked the pictures beneath her pillow before she slept, trembled.

Sir Humphrey glanced up at her window as Betty let him out. His step was rapid and he made haste, when he had reached the Sign of the Orange Tree, to shut himself within his chamber.

The panes were frosted and the fire but poorly kept a shiver from the air. The wind battered upon the walls and shook them so that the canopy of the great bed swayed above its funereal hangings, and the draught sucked up the chimney the warmth of the new-fed flames. Sir Humphrey neither smiled nor swore, but having built up his fire carefully and moved the table before it, wrote swiftly while the gusts sent frequent eddies of smoke across his eyes and set the candle bowing and flaring dimly above the page.

Midway of the sheet he lifted his quill and sat absorbed. Then went on again the faster.

"I cannot tell thee, thou pious Fainte-Hearte, how cruellie thys maid hath roused the man in mee," he began again. "'Tis a Madnesse and 'twill, doubtless, passe. By the tyme the Gold bee oures shee wil bee secure enow from mee—or any oth$^{r}$! But lett mee not thynke too much on her. O Sheepheart—Timorous, what divinenesse, what

Softnesse and what Strengthe in that wondrous Frame—— 'Tis more dangerous than thy wine! But feare naught——

"Look sharpe now and fynde yf by the Lawe a witch's relacons maie yett inherit or yf as here the whol bee confiscate. It maie bee I have holped defeate mine own Entente for I have greatlie stirred uppe the kettle wherever Suspicon simmered, & sett it boilynge merrilie! Let the next Packet brynge mee Worde—— Altho the die bee caste alreadie,--and 'twill bee *Temple Armitage* is hang$^{d}$—and who is shee! The other wuld have been of age come March so att y$^{e}$ Newe Yeare—we tak possecon safelie of our Owne!

"Stil, for the great$^{r}$ Suretie *forget not to consult the Lawes.*

"Monsieur grew somewhat insolente & I omit$^{d}$ the Dispatch wch bro't hym soone to Termes. Oure Daye dawneth!

"But lett mee not thynke on the Lamb!

"Enow—the Leopard's spotts bee yet unchanged so *have no Feares.* One Thynge I love—more th$^{n}$ frend or Beautie—guess thou what 'tis—thy,

GREGORY."

Sir Humphrey dropped his pen and watched the flames. Roger, passing the Orange Tree with the even stride of the abstracted, saw the light the shutter's crack revealed and came smartly to a realization of the place and hour. The night was dark, but the wind brought to him a sound that he did not understand. He half paused to listen and

as the sound was repeated he saw the door of the hostelry open and the irate face of Simon Bolt in the aperture. The lantern the innkeeper carried threw a single ray upon the features of a small man, heavily cloaked, that stood swaggering upon the step.

"'Tis late. He'll be abed," the host shouted with chattering teeth. He had set ajar but the upper half of the massive door. The would-be visitor leaned over and by a quick manœuvre slid the bolt, pushing the heavy frame sharply inward, his shoulder to the upper portion that the alarmed landlord thrust against him. As the stranger turned, his hat pushed awry, his cloak blown backward in the blast, Roger saw the face distinctly and astonishment brought a soundless ejaculation to his lips.

As he went on again he forgot the cold in wonder, piecing together new combinations in the puzzle he had set himself to solve. The Lady—escaped and here in Boston! Then the pirates had not all been slain. What more natural! In the haste to abandon the wreck fallen enemies had been but hastily regarded, and some, reviving, must have lowered the tender of the *Walrus* and rowed away under the cover of the dark! Did it mean a new danger to the Maid? Or came the miscreant unasked to levy tribute from one known of old? Proof, that were plain, his presence was of this former knowledge. Another link to add to the Governor's chain.

At his own door a small and furry creature bounded through the drift and Roger stooped and rubbed its ears.

"Art cold, Felix? 'Tis a bitter night," he remarked gently. "Shalt come with me," and tucking the kitten beneath his cloak, he carried him to his room.

The cat walked timidly about the floor, and growing bolder explored bravely, mounting finally to a chair. The room was hardly warmer than the air without, save for the wind's absence.

The young man drew his cloak about him closely and sat upon his bed to think. With a leap the black kitten scaled to the lofty surface of the counterpane and came rubbing and purring against her protector's side. The topaz eyes now and again turned confidingly to the grave face that for some moments seemed not aware of them.

Then Roger, looking down, at the contented and insistent effort to draw his dull attention, thumped and patted the plump creature comfortably as one might a dog.

"Art growing a great beauty, Felix," he said absently. "Art much improved in looks. I think the Little Maid would like thee."

## CHAPTER XXVI

### IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

THE Boston streets were no otherwise on the twenty-fifth of December than on the twenty-fifth of any other month. Men and women went with accustomed zeal about their tasks and neither sign nor greeting hinted at the unusual.

Temple, lying with closed lids, pretending drowsiness, did not notice the maid's hurried response to her good-morning, nor till the woman had gone did she wonder that it was Candace and not Betty who made her fire. As the wood began to crackle on the hearth she pulled aside the curtain and looked out. The snow lay almost untrodden in the road. Sir Humphrey's tracks were sifted full to the very door, while across the way a smooth mound lay drifted above the signs of Roger's wanderings. The outlook was depressing; even the smoke that crawled sluggishly into the grey air seemed heavy and without the courage to ascend.

She dressed shivering, choosing a warm gown for the intense cold that had clamped itself upon every object and seized piercingly upon her even before the sturdy blaze. Then she went forth into the empty hall and opened the door that led below. Her step did not linger on the threshold and she moved downward without touching the balustrade,

her foot light upon the stairway, her resolution ready with a smile of Christmas greeting.

"Where are the wreaths?" She asked the question with a startled glance at the empty windows, and Betty, setting a platter hastily upon the table, fled without looking up, her apron to her eyes.

The flying servant left the way clear into the kitchen and Candace stooping to stamp the sanded floor with its herring-bone pattern, swung back the oaken panels with a frantic push. Betty's sobs broke out loudly before the latch had clicked.

The Maid looked at the platter set for her breakfast, and turning would have followed, but Madam slipping the bar of Sir John's bedchamber, that faced the living room, came cautiously out. When she saw the girl she started as if to retreat and then stood still, her hand upon the post.

"A Merry Christmas, Madam," Temple moved toward her brightly. "And many a happier yet to follow this."

Madam said nothing. Her face had gone a chalky white and her eyes did not lift.

"What is it? Is Sir John worse?" the girl asked soberly. "You are anxious."

The older woman shook her head in a palsied sort of negation, and stepped back into the room, locking the door behind her.

Sir John lay helpless within the puffed-out feathers. Before the fire was set a stew of herbs and treacle, simmering. The man's voice was choked and his eyes held in frightened supplication to his sister. Now and then he whispered and she answered him.

"I am worse. She is come down!" he breathed, gazing terrified at the bar.

Madam nodded, heating a compress of thick flannel with shaking hands. The house was of unwonted luxury and many chimneys. Sir John's chamber shared the kitchen flue. The room was the one warm spot within the mansion.

"'Twill do no good—— She brings it back each time I get a little ease," the hoarse whisper went on. "And 'tis no use at best without the flaxseed."

"I will get it." His sister rose.

"And leave me here, the lock undone!" His eyes stood out with terror. "Nay, try the flannen first. Manda, 'tis awful agony. Think'st thou—she'll surely kill me?" Tears of pain and fear wet the red eyelids and spread upon the broad empurpled cheeks.

Madam drew closer the thick woollen bedcurtains lined with striped silk, and fastened them together on the side farthest from the fire. Her voice was tremulous.

"I will plead with her, John."

He moved suddenly and cried out in fresh alarm. "Nay, leave me not. Woman, leave me not. She is biting me. She hath her nails in my flesh——" He tore at the coverings tucked about his neck and his sister picked up the hot compress from the hearth and clapped it upon the bared chest, recovering him with a firm hand.

He cried out again, but the heat took effect and he lay quiescent till the flannel cooled.

Without, Temple moved to and fro for warmth.

Into the deserted living room came no spicy smell of cookery, no sound of labour. The kitchen was empty, both maids vanished, when, pausing in her walk, she opened its door to console the weeping Betty. The great fire here was brighter. She drew a stool beside it and sat with folded hands thinking. As she thought, broken words came to her from the sick room, and she stood up and looked about her as if a whip had lashed her sharply.

Anger, all her strength and pride, showed soldierly in her attitude.

"But where to go!" she said to herself aloud, her eyes upon the drifts outside the windows.

Steps, creeping down the kitchen stairs, had halted suddenly.

"Betty!" the Maid exclaimed as if here might be one to advise or comfort her dilemma. But Betty, sobbing again, ran from her with the haste of children fleeing from the dark.

The Maid stood a long time still. When she stirred, the tears that were in her eyes fell upon her wrist.

"Even Betty!" she said. She laid her hand upon her throat, clasping it with her quick gesture that pressed back the threatened grief. Then, impatiently, she wiped the wet splashes from her arm, and returning to her untasted breakfast, set herself to swallow what she could. It was cold and she succeeded not over well, but something she ate and going to her room began to lay together her books, her trinkets, and a portion of her clothing, packing the whole within a basswood box.

While she was yet busied at the task, the en-

trance below resounded to a knocking loud and prolonged.

Wearied by the hammering and shouts that ascended harshly, Temple crossed the chamber and threw wide the sash. The noisy one had retreated carefully, hearing the sound, to the snow-hidden bed of asters by the gate. She recognized the staff, chief symbol of the constable's importance.

"In the name of the law——" began the man, gazing upward from beneath his high peaked hat.

"Whom do you want?" the girl asked calmly.

"In the name of the law, I demand the person of Mistress Temple Armitage——"

"I am she," the Maid answered, looking down upon him without quailing. "For what am I wanted?"

"That, woman, will be set forth to thee in good time. Make haste."

Temple closed the window, laid the last things within her box, and shut and locked it. When she was ready for the street the shouts of the town officer were again besieging the walls.

The outer door was not yet unbolted. As the girl pushed up the wooden blocks and stepped out into the cold the angry constable would have seized her by the arm but she moved quickly beyond him and waited in the path.

"I will go with you, Sir. You need not touch me." And whether he feared her power, or was awed by her beauty or something more, he offered no further indignity. A little train gathered, following with grim outcry, as the tipstaff, plainly

enamoured of his office, dallied in needless deliberation on their way to the Town House square.

Here knots of men, leaving the Council Chamber, lingered talking, their faces reddened with the sharp air. But neither their grave and baleful stare nor the hoots and yells of the mob could gain for those who would have pursued farther an entrance to the hall. The officer shut them out, rapping the most aggressive soundly with his staff, and barring the massive door before he led his prisoner up the echoing stairs. A youthful custodian waited below to admit those who came of right.

In the long chamber above, groups of two or three still paused, discussing with stern faces, or arguing in hot debate. At the upper end of the barren room Mr. Cotton Mather, with the Lieutenant-Governor and that member of the Council whom the girl remembered at the Governor's dinner, were seated upon a platform, loftily raised above the surface of the floor. Mr. Mather was talking, and the others listened, swaying forward in grim assent.

"Stay thou here."

The tipstaff left her and went forward to the dais. The groups looked curiously at her and watched her as they talked. None offered her a seat on bench or stool, and none removed his hat whether it sat upon a wig or warmed a less protected head.

The Maid stood without awkwardness, without outward trembling. The colour lent by the frost had faded and her own had not come back to her

face, but her loveliness seemed the more striking, and the silver-grey of hood and cloak, crimson-lined and bearing the stamp of a less provincial world, gave colour enough fitly to frame her beauty.

The hall was cold and the men were well wrapped; those that had not their hands in gloves rubbed them together, and the place echoed with the noise of those who stamped upon the floor or walked up and down for warmth.

After long moments of the hostile looks, the unbroken waiting, the door opened again and a small horde of people whom she did not know came in on tiptoes, somewhat awed, their faces mottled with the chill. They drew away, looking askance at her, and watched her from the farther side.

The constable struck his staff heavily upon the boards.

"Mistress Temple Armitage, stand forth." He rolled the words in a loud sonorousness, and knocked again.

The girl came forward with an unhurried step and stood below the dais where he pointed her. The member of the Council started in some surprise and looked hastily at the other two.

"She is young," he whispered. "Is this the maid accused?"

The girl heard him, and her eyes rested on him an instant, studying a face that seemed too open for injustice, but Mr. Mather answered him aloud.

"Beware lest she bewitch thee. Even I have felt her evil power upon the will. I think we may proceed?" The others nodded. He rose with much solemnity and took his seat within a great arm

chair upon the centre of the platform. Ponderously wigged, full-faced, and substantial of body, he loomed large in the eyes of the watchers who had entered after the Maid, and the wave of his hand that beckoned them, brought them hastily beneath the platform,

"Be seated upon the benches," he commanded them, and waited till his order was obeyed.

Then he filled his lungs with a deep inspiration, and sweeping a magisterial glance about the hall where the other groups had grown silent to listen, he fixed his prominent eyes upon the girl and spoke in a voice that gave to the air a full vibration the constable had not attained.

"Mistress Armitage," he began, "thou art summoned hither by three of his Majesty's subjects who would inquire as to certain practices of thine held of deadly import to the health and safety of this Colony. If thou be'st found unable to answer to our satisfaction the questions wherewith we shall pursue the ends of justice, and if thou be not able to disprove the offered evidence of these witnesses, thou wilt stand accused of witchcraft and be committed to the common jail to await thy trial by the Commission thereto appointed by the Governor. Nor will friends in high places avail aught against the evidence nor any trust in other help than the truth have power to save thee from the just rewarding of thy crimes. Thou wilt be given the lawful trial accorded to others of the accused, and if thou be found guilty, delivered unto the hangman, who shall set thee for an example and a sign to all who

would darken this fair province with the commerce of black Hell. Thou art brought here for this open questioning by two members of the King's Commission and an anointed Servant of the Lord, that none may claim thou wast lightly or maliciously committed. Speak now the——"

The door opened noisily and another group made its appearance. Temple did not move nor look around, but as they took their seats with the first comers, the panting figure of Mistress Munch was projected within her range of vision and she turned surprised, and smiled quickly at Beulah, who looked somewhat thinner for her illness and did not return the greeting.

Shubael's chubby face lighted at sight of the Maid and she let the smile rest sadly for an instant upon him. But his brother admonished him harshly, setting him, with a cruel grasp upon the childish arms, farther upon the bench. The boy tried to draw away, but catching Mr. Mather's frown, sat tearfully quiet, a small and frightened figure beside the burly proportions of Jacob Munch.

"What hast thou to say, Mistress Armitage, against this charge?" Mr. Mather's voice had poured forth again more roundly than before.

"That it is false." The girl's voice rang as clearly as his own, strong in its indignation.

"Listen, Mistress, and take heed to thy words, that there be fewer sins imputed to thy charge. The eye of the Lord searcheth every secret thing, and there be nothing hid that shall not be revealed. Nor are His servants idle. In time of great stress and trouble"—Mr. Mather's tones took on an awed

and awesome depth—"I vowed unto Him a great and special service as the way should open, and forthwith upon the vow came the troubling of these colonies with the plague of witchcraft, whereby the innocent and the godly be made to suffer grievous agonies. So is the Devil striving to reconquer for himself that which was his before the coming of the white men, and in these wrestlings we contend not alone for the safety of these mortal tenements but for the salvation that the malignance of this attack hath put in fearful peril." The clergyman paused impressively. A hush held the room in an unnatural quiet.

"To accuse the innocent can gain naught for a righteous cause." Temple looked up at him quietly, speaking with a low distinctness that carried the words to all that were present. The member of the Council regarded her with grave scrutiny that weighed her earnestness. Lieutenant-Governor Stoughton frowned and turned his head away impatiently.

"Peace, woman, and hearken to that I have yet to utter," answered Mr. Mather sternly. "Put a better bridle upon a tongue set on fire of Hell. Thou art more dangerous than others by as much as thou hast the habit of much speaking that little adorneth a modest maiden's carriage." He turned to his fellow judges, addressing them and the people listening below. "Called of the Lord to see for myself if the charge upon this woman were a true one, I went yesterday to the house where she abides, and gave her opportunity of setting out the matter freely, explaining or confessing all. And first she

was angered and would have driven me forth——"

"As she did Elder Tripp and Mr. Larcas," put in Mistress Munch in an aside.

Mr. Mather fixed his eyes on her who had the temerity to interrupt him, and waited, cold and condemning, until she grew scarlet with shame.

"Look upon me and give heed, nor fall into the error of those who idly desire to hear their own voices," he ordered frigidly, before he resumed his narrative. "And when," he continued, "I fled not from her anger but charged her with these iniquities she gave herself less boldness but set herself to win me by sophistical phrases and a wily tongue, so that my very judgment was beset by the subtleties of the Fiend; and when, coercing my will by her Satanic craft so that I, for a test, permitted her to touch my hand, there ran upon my arm like lightning a stupefying force that changed my sight and I thereupon beheld her as a queenly maid, noble and seemly, and sealed with the seal of the elect. Wherefore, when I was withdrawn from her presence, there came upon me a painful pricking and discomfort of that hand which she had touched, so that when I would set myself to write a sermon my fingers were cramped upon the quill, and although in the day I had sat writing with ease and no distress for eight hours without more pause than needful for a small repast, yet in the evening I was thus afflicted. Upon which portent I prostrated myself before the Lord, praying for succour, and He showed me the true similitude of this damsel as of a direful monster, scaly like unto a fish and with eyes

fiery and shooting sparks of flame, while upon her brow was a reddened mark—the finger of God's wrath."

A stir went about the hall. Those nearest Temple fell back quickly.

Mr. Mather observed the effect of his eloquence and reseated himself in the great chair by whose arms he had pulled himself upright in the fervour of his speech.

The door was opened loudly and the constable again appeared. Shivering and weeping beside him was Betty. Behind followed one of the men who had prayed by Beulah.

As the hall settled to quiet once more Temple would have spoken, but her first word was interrupted harshly by Mr. Stoughton.

"Hold thy peace, woman," he commanded. "An' thou interruptest thus it will be needful to set a gag upon thy tongue."

The member of the Council moved uneasily.

"We will proceed'"—Mr. Mather looked about the room picking out his witness—"to question those who have observed what is strange or noteworthy in the conduct of Mistress Armitage. Bring forward Eliphalet Bardon."

The tipstaff came promptly forth with a lad in whose face importance and fright had together set an unnatural grimace. He stood as far as he could place himself from the Maid, and looked up blinking at the three upon the platform, as if their greatness blurred his sight.

"Eliphalet, tell me truthfully whether thou hast seen Mistress Armitage."

"Yea. I have seen her," quavered the boy shrilly.

"When and where hast thou seen her?"

"Many times when she hath passed by our house; and she took the witch cat," he added eagerly.

Mr. Mather leaned forward.

"Tell about the cat."

"The witch cat was set in a pillory and its eyes were fire eyes. It cried and then the witch—she"—he pointed with his stubbed forefinger—"swooped like a hawk out of the sky and carried off the cat."

"What didst thou, Eliphalet?" asked Mr. Stoughton.

"All of us ran after and pelted her, save Shubael Munch, who struck me because I said she was a witch"—he paused to scowl at Shubael—"and when I but touched her dress a great blow struck me like lightning and threw me high in the air and I fell and was hurt."

"Where went the witch?" Mr. Stoughton also leaned forward.

"I do not know. Captain Verring came to her and they took the cat away."

"She did not vanish? Think boy." Mr. Stoughton still spoke.

"I did not—yea, she vanished for a little in a cloud, and then came back."

"Hast thou been since afflicted?" Mr. Mather took again the reins. The boy's eyes grew larger. He sent a frightened glance toward the girl.

"Yea, Sir. Many times the cat hath come to me in the night and spit at me and once it pulled me from the bed."

The lad was led back by the constable and his mother took his place, testifying that what he said was true, for she had herself found him upon the floor.

Mr. Mather dismissed her with a look of satisfaction and summoned the other members of the group surrounding her. One by one they gave their testimony, eager or timid, casting curious or terrified looks upon the Maid.

The last of these was a drover who went sometimes to and fro between Boston and Andover, with sheep and cattle, and often hauled lumber for the builders. His examination was long and wearisome.

"Thou sayest she hath a rare malevolent influence upon the brutes that maketh them subordinate to her will?" Mr. Mather put the question.

"Sir?" The drover gazed anxiously about him.

"How dost know animals obey her? Speak." Mr. Stoughton's precise and chilling brevity was plainer to the man.

"I seen her," he began in a low tone. Temple turned at his voice that had grown bashful, and looked at him with sudden recognition. He shuffled uneasily, and his weather-scarred face reddened.

"He cannot speak because she looks at him." Mr. Mather nodded to his colleagues. "Turn thy eyes another way, Mistress."

Temple let her gaze dwell an instant in proud compassion on the shuffling figure and looked slowly about the hall. Frozen suspicion, blank hostility, everywhere! She drew herself more quietly erect and waited without reply.

"She moved my horses up a hill, your Honours," began the man. "I'd beaten till the blood run on their backs, but they'd not budge. An' she come out o' the book shop—'twas in King street—and she talked with 'em and touched 'em and they went with her an' no more ado. Often too I seen her when I had sheep an' cattle and they'd let her go anigh 'em and show no fear.''

"Thou hast seen her often?"

"Aye, she visited my wife that lay sick and gave her wine——"

"And is thy wife afflicted?"

"She is dead, gored of an ox—— An' I seen the witch only a sennight afore speak to the ox. I heerd her words: 'Thou must mend thy manners—wild one,' she said, 'or thou'lt do mischief yet'. She put it in his head. 'Twas ever unruly with me. I'd nigh flayed it often for that 'twould not obey. But to her alone it showed no rages."

"Enough. Go thy way, Adonijah. Thou hast borne witness for the Lord. They who have given their testimony may depart an' they will." Mr. Mather waited.

The drover, whose breath was heavy of sugared rum, pushed himself through the throng toward the door. The rest remained, closing up nearer to hear, and the constable, at a word from Mr. Mather, led out the unhappy Betty from the corner where she had retreated.

"Thy name, woman." She looked up at the command and dried her eyes.

"Betty, your Honour," she answered curtseying.

"You are of the household of Sir John Winchcombe?" The words sounded like an arraignment.

"Yea, Sir—your Honour," she replied quickly.

Mr. Mather sat more rigidly upright in the great chair. "Doth not Sir John Winchcombe lie in great agony afflicted of a witch?" he asked.

"They say so," answered Betty tremulously. "But he is better now."

"Since Mistress Armitage is no longer in the house?" Mr. Mather brought out the question with triumphant emphasis.

Betty was silent. Her eyes, roving in a troubled fashion, had fallen upon her mistress.

"Answer thou. Answer the question of Mr. Mather." The Lieutenant-Governor had again interposed.

"He is better, Sir——"

"When began the change? Was it not after Mistress Armitage had come away?" Mr. Mather persisted.

"He was better when I came forth, Madam said. He was sleeping." Betty drew her breath tearfully.

"Could I not afflict him still an' I were a witch?" asked Temple suddenly.

Betty wheeled and gazed at her intently and at the circle of cold and curious faces behind her, and with the look she became calmer and her helpless trembling ceased.

"Madam said it was the flaxseed seemed to ease him," she volunteered.

"Answer what is asked thee; save thy chatter

for without," Mr. Stoughton bade her, and she curtseyed again, her eyes on the ground.

"Whom doth Sir John hold to have bewitched him? Whom doth he suspect of this malignity?" The clergyman watched her carefully.

"Madam hath the care of Sir John. None else hath seen him," the woman replied.

Mr. Mather's anger was in danger of mastering his control. "How darest thou so mock us?" he cried vociferously. "Speak. Whom doth Sir John suspect? 'Tis this maiden here, Temple Armitage, is it not?"

"They say so." Betty wept again, plucking at her round black apron and catching her breath in a sob.

"Thou hast been much about her person?" Mr. Mather went on.

"Ever since she came to Madam, Sir—your Honour——"

"Hast thou never seen upon her the witchmarks? Think well lest a falsehood cost thee a doom like hers."

"Marks! Upon my mistress!" Betty dropped her apron and glared at him forgetful and indignant. "She hath not a mark on her whole body! Who dares say there's a mark on Mistress Armitage! She hath the fairest——"

"That will do—— Answer no more than is required of thee," her questioner interrupted. "Look me in the face, Betty, and tell the whole truth. Is not thy mistress a witch?"

"No—she's not—— She's not a witch—— I wish we'd never come to this cruel country——"

Betty buried her face in the apron and rocked to and fro in hysterical weeping.

"Calm thyself, Betty." The member of the Council spoke again. "How long hast thou served in the household of Sir John Winchcombe?"

"Ten years come Christmas—— Ten years this very day, Sir," Betty looked up more hopefully.

"Has thou ever known Sir John to be thus afflicted before?" Mr. Mather frowned. Mr. Stoughton cast a contemptuous glance in the direction of the speaker and looked indifferently to the windows where the frost was still thick on the small panes.

"O, often, sir," Betty answered clearly. "He hath them ever after he goeth to London or hath been all night drinking with his good friends at home. Sometimes it taketh him in one place, sometimes another."

"And Mistress Armitage, hath she been of the household of Sir John since first thou went to them?"

"O, no, Sir. She came but five year agone, and a glad day it was for all of us, that brought her——"

"Hath Sir John been seized by these attacks only since the coming of Mistress Armitage?"

"Nay,— he had them always. 'Twas——"

"Peace—peace. Enough! These be but unprofitable questions and irrelevant. Thou canst go, Betty," put in Mr. Mather peremptorily.

"May I be permitted briefly to question this witness?"

Temple made the request with a look of grave appeal. The member of the Council leaned for-

ward and spoke in Mr. Mather's ear. The three conferred, Mr. Stoughton reinforcing the chairman's emphatic denial.

"Thou art presumptuous, Mistress Armitage. Hereafter, keep silence, unless thou'rt bid to speak."—Mr. Mather resettled himself, the judicial severity of his manner rendered more forcible by irritation. The shadows that told of a night-long vigil showed more plainly under his angrily staring eyes.

"Call the wife of Christopher Munch," he commanded. The dame, who was nearer to the dais than the tipstaff, moved with some alacrity into the place left vacant by Betty.

"Mistress Munch, it is your painful duty to tell us aught known to you concerning this maiden here, whom many have accused of a most heinous crime in the sight of God. When did you first see this Mistress Armitage?"

"In the window of Madam Fitch's house. I marked her then for one I would not have my Beulah to know, and had she listened to me she would not be as she is to-day, Mr. Mather."

Temple, who had heard the opening words with evident surprise, gazed with the rest of the throng upon Beulah, who, as soon as she felt the eyes of the Maid upon her, was drawn in a sudden contortion, hiding her face and twisting her body as if in pain. When Temple turned wonderingly away, the contortions ceased. The men upon the dais gazed significantly upon one another, even the member of the Council affected by the sight. "Look at her," Mistress

Munch went on unhindered, "and see to what her trust has brought her now. None of my children hath escaped. I cannot think why we of all others were doomed to be so tormented and abused!" Her voice quavered.

"You and yours have truly been but ill entreated Mistress. The Lord's people are roused in your defence. Speak on."

"I marked her that day of Governor Phips's arriving and no good luck have I had in aught since first a royal Governor was set over us."

"Keep to thy tale," interrupted Mr. Mather hastily.

An approving gleam shot from the cold eyes of Mr. Stoughton.

"I beg your pardon, Sir." Mistress Munch curtseyed involuntarily to the reprimand of Mr. Mather, and Beulah flushed darkly at her mother's tone. "I have had many trials and I was ever readier for work than words—— From the beginning I saw that Jacob was no more himself. But young men, an' they be pleasing to the maids, must go their own gait, and he had held a fancy for many he soon forgot." She cast a glance at Temple who watched her, each instant colder and more amazed. "But I warned Beulah no good would come of knowing such a vain aristocratical creature who would not even show she saw that Jacob favoured her. Sly and——"

"What have you seen, Mistress Munch, that persuades you the maiden is a witch?" asked the member of the Council, stopping her soberly.

"Pray let Mistress Munch tell her tale in her own

manner," reproved Mr. Mather with asperity. "'Tis so we get the truth most freely."

"It were well she gave us the kernel and less of the husk mayhap," answered the admonished Member settling his hat and drawing his cloak more warmly about him.

Beulah coughed, and Temple looked with involuntary sympathy in her direction, whereupon the cough grew violent and the contortions began again.

Mistress Munch rambled on through devious byways of her own conjectures, till she came to her daughter's illness, when she grew somewhat more coherent. The coughing started by Beulah had become general and the lad who had testified about the cat fell also into contortions, crying out at intervals and mewing violently.

"Jacob could neither sleep nor had he any stomach for his victuals, and would do naught but mope and say that Beulah must go with him to see Mistress Armitage for that she'd not receive him an' he went alone; and thereupon Beulah went, as she will tell ye, and set forth her brother's misery and prayed relief of the maid who wasted him away, but the girl only mocked her and said Jacob was none of her affair, and Beulah, being angry——"

"Would not this properly be the testimony of Mistress Beulah? Tell rather what you yourself have known," put in the member of the Council.

"'Tis that I'm telling," went on the dame. "Being angry, Beulah spoke sternly, warning the evil witch of her ill doings, and straightway she sickened and fell ill abed of the pest." The noises about

the hall had ceased. The attention that hung upon the words was absolute. The Maid's face was white but not with fear. The look she bent upon the voluble witness was filled with scorn so fine it passed for cold endurance.

"Shubael I sent away, and Jacob went also to his aunt and I cared alone for Beulah, who was like to die. She was an awful sight, Sirs, all——"

"Mam!" Beulah's voice, protesting.

"Terrible sick she was," resumed the woman, "and lying like a log and breathing hard. Then came the good elder, and Mr. Larcas to pray with her, and at the first word they uttered ('twas 'Almighty an' Ever-living God') Beulah rose up from the stupor and screamed, and ceased not to cry out upon them and carry on till Mistress Armitage stood by the bed and drove us all forth and took Beulah in her arms."

Beulah moved uneasily as her mother talked and once looked up distractedly at the girl who had nursed her back to health, but as she looked her face hardened and grew old, and she dropped her eyes, her fingers plucking nervously at her dress.

"Did Mistress Armitage do those things most often commended for the sick?" asked Mr. Mather, encouraging the woman who had paused in a sort of apoplexy of wordy anger.

"Nay, not one. She did all otherwise. She let the wind blow into the room from open windows—and gave her all the water she could drink and fastened down her hands so she could not even toss about and get some ease."

The audience listened with a lively horror. At

the mention of open windows the member of the Council shook his head and frowned suspiciously.

"And yet the girl recovered?" Mr. Mather asked quickly.

"She was completely in the evil power of her, and hath been since the day when she went to plead for her poor brother. Now, she mopes like him and constantly hath pains and torments."

"But why should Mistress Armitage go to so much trouble in the nursing? Would not this evil power have been as great and she away from contact with the pest—if she be of a truth a witch?" The member of the Council looked puzzled.

"She minded it not for that Satan would not let her take the contagion," answered Mistress Munch glibly.

"Her daughter will explain that," put in Mr. Stoughton. "Let the woman finish, that we may get on."

"Aye—ye'll not need to hang her an' ye freeze her first," muttered a voice in the crowd.

The judges frowned, and the constable went fussily among the shivering throng, but the culprit could not be found.

"Hast thou more to say?" demanded Mr. Mather. "Knowest thou aught else against the accused?"

"So much I could not take time to tell them all——"

"Thou shalt state them to the true Commission," put in the third judge somewhat wearily.

"But two of them I would first tell here," she answered unabashed. "She hath bewitched my

little Shubael that was a child in a thousand for a quick obedience, and gentle ever, so that he flouts his mother and——"

Shubael burst into loud crying and Jacob boxed his ears. For the first time the girl looked directly at the young man's face, a flash of indignation in her eyes. Jacob returned the flash with a gaze of vicious triumph.

Mistress Munch enlarged upon the malice that held Shubael in subjection, then raised her voice as she went on. "And upon another hath she an awful spell, one old enough to resist and suffer as hath my Beulah and my Jacob and not weakly let the Devil have his will—and that is Roger Verring."

There was a sensation among those who listened. All eyes were fixed upon the Maid to whose cheeks a faint flush had risen at the words.

"Could this not——" she began, but Mr. Mather thundered at her with the denunciatory wrath familiar in his pulpit.

"Wouldst thou be bound upon thy deceitful lips that thy wanton tongue be quieted! Know'st thou not what things are an abomination to the Lord, —a proud look, a lying tongue,—aye and a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations! Woe unto them that put darkness for light and light for darkness, and them who, going apparelled like kings' daughters in rich raiment carry corruption in their hearts. Wait till thou art bidden to speak, nor interrupt the counsels of them that serve the Lord.—What hadst thou to say of Captain Verring, Mistress?" His voice, changed to a milder

tone, was still ringing with retributory fire. Mistress Munch had been somewhat alarmed, but she recovered quickly.

"What proof have you of his bewitchment?" asked the third member. "Is he afflicted with any grievous ill or doth he suffer pain?"

"He hath her black cat and hath a name for it, as it had been a human being. 'Tis through it she sends him word of her commands."

"Who could believe such folly?" The Maid exclaimed, wondering. Mr. Mather had not observed her; he was listening intently to the witness.

Mr. Stoughton looked less pleased. Nicolas Verring was his warm partisan and strong supporter. Mistress Munch finished in a tone of bitter pique. "Daily, and often many times a day, he came——"

"Roger Verring?"

"Yes, Sir—he came to my door and oft followed me within asking for speech with Mistress Armitage, while Beulah lay nigh to death, above."

"Inquired he not also for Beulah?" asked Mr. Stoughton.

"Not save for politeness' sake. He hath never given a glance to any maid till he was beset of the Devil in the stranger."

Temple looked at the woman, surprise showing fleeting in her still face. Beulah saw the new wonder in the look and set her lips in a yet straighter line.

"It was for the witch he feared—'twas plain enough. And all the strange herbs and fumigations and compounds that he brought, with wines

and on a day a great bunch of red berries from the woods that I cast out. There was no time for wicked folly—and to be bringing a clutter of things from the woods——"

"Were these not for Mistress Munch as well?" asked Mr. Stoughton again.

"Nay, I tell you, Sir. The foolish twigs of berries were for Mistress Armitage—'twas some sign agreed upon I doubt not——"

"That is sufficient, Mistress," put in the member of the Council assertively. "'Is't not best we get on?" he asked the other two. "Mistress Beulah looketh quite unfit to linger in the chill of this hall."

"The Lord of Hosts is with her," pronounced Mr. Mather sonorously. "Beulah Munch, stand forth."

A quick expectancy crowded the listening multitude nearer, and the tipstaff, flourishing his wand, pushed them back, commanding those that had risen before the filled benches to seat themselves or be expelled.

Beulah appeared little like one supported of the Lord. Her cheeks had a restless fire and her lips, drawn in their hard and bitter line, were not the signs of holiness. But her evident emotion, the softness and meekness of her drooping figure, the marks of suffering plain upon her face, won instant sympathy. Again a murmur ran about the hall, a sound that acclaimed belief in all that she might utter.

Her voice, modulated to a pitch as far as possible from the aggressive rattle of her mother's, came in a reluctant undertone, but loud enough so her words were audible to all who chose to listen.

Once when she had raised her eyes, drawn by

the look of grieved betrayal Temple had involuntarily given, she had turned away startled for an instant confused. The confusion was converted instantly to a painful writhing, and she swayed as if she would have fallen. "Make her—turn away," she gasped.

Angry glances were shot at Temple.

"Aye, keep the witch's eyes from off her," growled the undetected voice.

Beulah, with lids lowered again, corroborated all her mother had said, adding circumstantial and carefully constructed tales of the sufferings of Jacob and the evil state of little Shubael, whose cowering figure sufficiently bore out her words.

"And is it true that R ger Verring hath never given attention to a Boston maid nor kept company with any—at his age?" asked the member of the Council, fixing a searching look upon the downcast face.

"It is true. Everyone will tell you that, Sir," she said.

"Yea—that's true—— A cold-blooded young fellow is Verring," commented the voice.

Mr. Mather's gaze sought sternly the cause of the interruption, and the member of the Council persisted.

"Let not modesty forbid any word you might have to say," he demanded with his firm mouth more strictly pursed. "Was he at no time a suitor for yourself? Gave he no sign of interest?"

"None." Again Beulah lifted her eyes. "He hath never been even of the circle of my friends since I grew up."

Temple moved suddenly, so convincing was the tone and the direct look, but no flush came to her face and no sign showed whether among so many lies she believed this one statement.

Mr. Mather was questioning the witness further.

"And what reason, think you she had, Mistress, for afflicting you with the pest?"

"To destroy my soul," came from the girl's lips unfalteringly. The writhing took her again. "I cannot talk unless Mistress Armitage be taken away," she said as she was restored once more.

"That cannot be. She must hear and know wherefore justice demands her commitment. Strive against her spell, and I will supplicate that thy tongue be loosed," answered Mr. Mather encouragingly.

There was a heavy pause in which the clergyman bent his head in silence and Beulah's contortions grew gradually less pronounced.

"I can go on now," she said.

"Proceed." Mr. Mather regarded her with complacency, seeing his petitions so soon rewarded.

"While I lay sick she asked me often if I would serve the Devil, saying he would requite me well, and twice she brought me the Devil's book that I might sign it and said she was the Queen of Hell and could give me all that I desired, would I but put my name upon the page."

While Beulah had been speaking the door had opened hurriedly from without and Roger had pushed his way through the throng.

When the girl paused, swaying again as if seized with acute misery, he spoke in a voice whose ring

broke like good daylight upon the dismal creeping of nightmare.

"And will any man sit here and listen, unprotesting, to lies so manifest?"

Beulah had grown whiter than the Maid but the colour came quickly back. Roger's eyes that sought first for Temple were fixed imperiously upon the self-constituted judges.

Mr. Mather rose majestically from his platform throne.

"Captain Verring, see that you outrage not the decencies of these lawful and just proceedings. If you would remain, have a care how you address those vested with authority of church and state."

"Nay, Sirs, there was no disrespect, but I would know by whose command this malice is given the chance to so display itself."

"'Tis enough that we know by whose authority we are assembled, Captain Verring. Proceed Mistress." Mr. Stoughton fixed his cold eyes in a warning not wholly unfriendly upon the young man.

When Beulah's even flow of carefully uttered phrases came to an end, Roger moved somewhat nearer to the Maid and waited resolutely where all could mark she was not left alone and undefended.

The witness, pausing effectively, had turned back her loose sleeve. The arm beneath was slightly scarred from her disease, but more conspicuous than the scars, across from side to side ran sore and angry burns.

"These be some of the things I have endured," she said quietly, "for that I refused to do as I

was bid. I pray you excuse me from showing more."

"'Tis enough at present. Hold thyself in readiness to testify, and may God chasten us to greater zeal for beholding such grievous suffering," Mr. Mather replied with unction.

An angry groan had followed the exposure of the burns.

Beulah walked staggeringly to her seat and as she fell straightway into convulsions of much distress, the frightened Shubael was led forward to the dais.

Mr. Mather looked with a grim assurance at the quivering figure and the tear-spotted face, and began in a tone whose energy left no option to the answerer.

"Shubael, thou knowest Mistress Armitage is a witch?"

Shubael, shivering the more, lifted his chubby face, marked and blurred with tears, and the Maid turned away her head, not doubting the child's reply, and finding painful the sight of such massive enginery set to coerce a creature so small; but the boy's voice came with quick and loud response.

"She is not a witch," he answered staunchly, trembling mightily but gazing upon the judges as if he dreamed they would believe his word.

"Shubael!" Mr. Mather gathered his brows in a portentous scowl. "Shubael Munch, thou art here to tell how thou hast been afflicted—not to contradict and fly out upon thy questioners. How hath this wicked woman taught thee so to speak?"

"She is not a wicked woman." Shubael stood his ground.

"Hath she not brought thee to this? Why dost thou cry if thou art happy, Shubael?" asked the member of the Council.

The boy looked at him, badgered into anger, and half weeping in his impotence.

"You know why! You make me cry," he answered. "And I am beaten—and you would have me say a lie about Mistress Armitage." The words poured out convulsively. He turned toward the Maid and Roger, tears running upon his swollen little face.

Roger smiled upon the little fellow as if he held himself from words with grim violence to his desire.

For the first time the Maid's gaze was dimmed, and she set her teeth upon her lip that for a little trembled like the lad's.

"Thou art beaten. That is the witch—she makes thee to be beaten," went on Mr. Mather excitedly.

"'Tis not—'tis Jacob beats me—and my mother," cried out the boy, thrusting his fists into his brimming eyes.

"Wouldst be a witch thyself like Mistress Armitage?" demanded Mr. Stoughton with stern emphasis.

"She's not a witch," the child repeated stubbornly and fell to bitter sobbing, his body shaken more than ever by fright and wretchedness.

"That will do. This contumacy in a child so young is proof enough were there no other," pronounced Mr. Mather, waving the boy away.

"Jacob Munch, come thou forward and give a truthful history of what thou hast as yet divulged to none but me."

Roger's hand closed upon itself.

Jacob was less jaunty of manner as he advanced, carrying himself with an unusual sedateness, a smooth regret in his sliding inflections as he began.

"I must ask your patience, gentlemen," he said deliberately, "if I go back to a time when I was but a lad and Captain Verring and I were boys upon the *Araby Rose*, a ship commanded, as you know, by Captain Phips."

"It were well to omit the names of those not directly concerned with what you have to tell," advised Mr. Mather. "It will allow our minds to dwell the more impartially upon the evidence."

Jacob looked meaningly at Mr. Stoughton, bowed to Mr. Mather, and went on with his tale.

"I was then but a lad and might have been easily led astray by evil practices had not the godly precepts and examples of my honoured father and my mother, and that grace which is vouchsafed to them who seek with earnestness, sustained me in many ordeals wherein another might have succumbed." The words had evidently been conned with a care unlike the evasive habit of one fond of his own ease. "It would not behoove me to speak of many practices upon the *Araby Rose*, the drunkenness, the obscenity, and foulness——"

The girl looked with indignant scorn upon the young man, who went forward with complacent gravity. Roger had started, but restrained himself.

Mr. Mather interrupted with some sharpness. Jacob bowed again, a malicious light plain in his shifty eyes, and resumed as if nothing had checked the dull flow of his words. "I will speak only of the occurrences that have a convenient bearing upon the matter these revered and honoured gentlemen are met here to consider," he said mellowly. "You may be aware"—he lifted his gaze to the platform and averted it as quickly—"that the *Rose* was engaged in a great battle with a pirate five times her size. The freebooters were ferocious men and were a myriad to our one. It was a monstrous struggle and like to be a dreadful slaughter wherein we should all perish, when upon a sudden"—he paused; the listeners gathered nearer—"upon a sudden," he repeated, "came a clap of thunder, lightning played about the ships, and the pirates began to yield, giving way most unaccountably to our blows, though still in excess of us by countless numbers. I was in the front of the battle——"

The Maid smiled for the first time, listening with the rest.

"And I saw beside the Captain," went on Jacob, "the figure of a maid." A loud stir, quickly hushed, rose upon the words. "Although she was in the midst of the swords that flashed across her she was not harmed, and as fast as she moved ahead the pirates tumbled backward, their arms appearing paralyzed, until all were either sent over the side to drown or were killed upon the deck."

The excitement was growing. The crowd fell still farther away from the Maid, leaving her and Roger quite alone.

The girl turned about as if realizing their isolation.

"You expose yourself to fearful danger, Captain Verring; no need we both should perish," she said in a rapid undertone. "Think on your mother."

He moved nearer, his look answering.

"I was knocked senseless in the fight," Jacob was going on (Roger opened his lips but closed them, waiting) "and when I came to myself the great ship of the pirates had vanished and no sign of them was left but this same maiden, who had no name, but was called the Captain's Little Maid, being ever beside him. She went always in perfect silence and sometimes she appeared without warning by those who talked secretly, nor could any see from what direction she had approached.

"For many months we had sought everywhere not finding the treasure, but upon her coming among us Roger Verring and Captain Phips placed her in the periagua and we rowed once more to search the reefs."

Mr. Mather was leaning forward, his expression divided between uneasiness and overpowering interest.

"She kept silence still," continued the softly gliding voice, "but as we rowed among the rocks, our boat stopped of itself in a narrow channel. The oars could not move it." A breath of wonder again! All had risen, those behind mounting upon the benches to see the better. "When the boat stopped the Maid stood up in the midst of a yellow flame and pointed downward. Nopomuk, the

Indian, who drives the horses of the Governor, leaped into the water and brought back a shining mass of gold." The murmur increased but Jacob had not ceased and it hushed again. "These be a few of the things that happened. The men, in great fear of their souls, refused at last to touch this unhallowed treasure and made a righteous mutiny, and all who led the fray were seized with horrid agonies and fell down crying out and moaning. None who mutinied escaped some of these dreadful pains and ere they could recover they were forced to sign a compact with Hell——"

"Didst thou also take that oath?" asked the member of the Council.

"At the first, Sir, I resisted, at what cost of torments 'tis needless here to say," answered the witness, still smoothly. "But at the last I yielded, being beside myself with the torture and scarce knowing what I did." Roger moved forward a pace and Jacob glanced at him, involuntarily shifting his own position. Roger's gaze had disconcerted him for the moment, and he went on hurriedly. "'Twas a fearful oath"—he shuddered without affectation—"and pledged the ship's company never to reveal the pressence of a maid upon the *Rose*. I held the oath binding—but it were better to suffer torment myself than to let many be in danger, and though, since the Maid—who stands before you there—appeared in Boston on the very day of Sir William Phips's return, I have suffered such horrors as none may know (so that even my mother misinterpreted), I have, till my sister sickened, held my peace."

"Thou didst wrong, Jacob Munch," Mr. Mather spoke somewhat shrilly. "See how we be punished for any sheltering of evil-doers." He looked meaningly at Roger, and turned again to Jacob, who was ready to proceed. "If thou hast more to say, it will be in good time when the Commission shall assemble. It had been better," he added with condemnation, "thou hadst earlier told me frankly the whole truth and not a part in this matter."

"'Tis not the truth, but utter and malignant falsehood." Roger confronted Jacob Munch and the judges with stern assurance. "I ask the right to question this witness. This matter concerneth me, and more, the Governor of this colony! The character of Governor Phips should prove to you the falsehood of this tale."

"Your presumption, Sir, is without all precedent," retorted Mr. Mather in sudden rage. "These witnesses come not to be the plaything of any bystander!"

"Had these things been true," Roger insisted, "I must have seen them, and my word should be as good as that of Jacob Munch. I demand that you hear me."

The three were not listening. The member of the Council had bent again to the other two, combating their negation.

"'Twill do no harm. An' he speak not, it may be some will say the maid was not given justice," he urged.

"Of what consequence!" Mr. Stoughton responded angrily. "The maid is a witch. Why let a grown man make exhibition of his slavery?"

But the Member at length prevailed by his persistency, and Mr. Mather, more hectic and still more enraged than he had been before, announced the decision.

"I misdoubt me we yield to Satan in the matter. Be brief," he ordered sharply, and Roger, coming nearer to the platform, spoke directly to the three, but with a clear decisive energy that filled the hall.

Certainty took on different forms of doubt, and belief in the Maid's guilt seemed somewhat shaken.

"Jacob Munch was not near the fight, but cowering in the vessel's hold, where he had hid himself!" The straight inflections had at the very first struck home their truth to some whom Jacob's sliding speech had wearied. "Ask any man who served. I can produce a dozen here in Boston ere two months be out. None could be found who would believe his word, not one. He proves himself a liar. He says he was knocked senseless by the pirates. Had this been true and any apparition had arisen after, he could not have seen it. But had he been fighting when his apparition came, then could he not have been knocked senseless since he says the pirates' arms were paralyzed. Nor was there any man who ever lived who believed Governor Phips had need of witchcraft to win his battles! And the story of the treasure is a lie. 'Twas found by months of seeking and not by miracle. I was present and I know. If ye believe me not, ask then the Governor himself. For the mutiny, I was there as well when the Captain single handed beat back the angry horde who would have made of him a buccaneer and of the *Rose* a pirate

ship—not fearing the treasure but coveting its wealth! And never was there unrighteous compact made upon the ship, but one 'twould honour any man to make. A compact there was—'tis true. How nobly 'twas kept by the Captain ye know. Will you believe the man that stops not at vile traducing of our Governor who even now risks his life for us, absent and in peril? 'Tis to naught but the patience of Sir William that Jacob Munch owes his life. After that very fight he would have hung for his cowardice and desertion had it not been for Sir William." Mr. Stoughton would have spoken, but Roger went swiftly on. "And if he spare not the name of Governor Phips, assailing him behind his back, who dreams he'll spare a maiden his importunities did not please. There be witnesses enough in Boston who know the double life he leads. Nor is his baseness equalled by any save hers who has here attacked that life was risked for her. To bring accusation on evidence like this violates what has been the unassailable right of every Englishman since the Magna Charta. It breaks every law of justice, every canon of procedure, and is itself liable——"

"Enough!" Mr. Mather and Mr. Stoughton were reinforced by the constable who approached discreetly, but paused near at hand.

The Maid's eyes were lighted with a gratitude that warmed her face to a look less loftily remote.

"Captain Verring," Mr. Mather looked confidently upon his would-be victim. "How long since this Maid entrapped thee in her spell; how long hath she had thee in the toils?"

"Surely a man of weight cannot put seriously a question of such folly!" Roger answered hotly. "But in truth, Mistress Armitage hath plainly repudiated even my proffered friendship."

"You champion her cause somewhat ardently for one who hath been so denied," put in Mr. Stoughton with dry and clicking precision. "Pray will you state that you be not in love with Mistress Armitage?"

Temple grew white again and the clear anger and aversion of her gaze would have brought at least a brief trouble to any man but William Stoughton.

"Such questions transcend the bounds of any decent freedom." Roger drew nearer yet to the platform. "You avoid a more important question. The point at issue is whether or no you sit quiescent while the Governor is slandered and an innocent maid put in peril of her life by brazen malice."

"'Tis you, Sir, who evade," shrieked Mr. Mather in a fury. "Tell me this, dost thou or dost thou not love this maid?"

Roger gave back the look with a gaze before which his questioner made literal retreat as if in fear; then his expression changed.

"Yea, I love her," he said slowly, with solemn emphasis. "Though she neither desireth nor knoweth of my love. And I love her because'"—his voice penetrated, thrilling the stolid listeners to something deeper than a curious greed of new sensation—"because she is above all malice, all envy, all things unclean and common, by the pure and holy height of her own exalted truth."

The hush that followed, even Mr. Stoughton

made no attempt to break. Beulah sat rigid, her hands locked. The Maid's lids drooped as if she would escape the throng and then her eyes opened, and she looked steadfastly before her.

Mr. Mather had risen with instant and volcanic rage, silent only because his words had choked him in their haste.

"Men of the Massachuset colony."—His outcry shook the air as his voice returned.—"We be met here for examination of one accused of the most awful crime of witchcraft, and the Lord hath guided our deliberations to the exposing of two others, dangerous malignants and not to be with safety endured in this our afflicted town. Therefore the constable will with all speed remove to the common jail, there to await their trial, by the Commission, the persons of Temple Armitage, Roger Verring, and Shubael Munch."

At the last name a loud shriek rent the hall, stopping even those without the building. Mistress Munch had gathered up Shubael in her arms. Beulah and Jacob sprang each before the boy with a fearful alarm and the first withering blight of sure remorse upon their faces. The constable advanced toward the screaming and angry woman, but she fled before him carrying the child clasped close, and beating the crowd from her path with a frenzy of terror that made its way.

Mr. Mather, still on his feet, shouted frantically from the dais.

"Stop the woman. Stop the woman—— Bar the way——"

But Beulah and Jacob, exerting a force almost

equal to the mother's, broke through the half-hearted efforts of the crowd who would have followed.

The woman's screams resounded above the sudden babel; Mr. Mather's voice grew louder, and Roger, under cover of the confusion, even as Mistress Munch escaped, made his way, unnoticed of the constable, to the door and out into the street.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE FLIGHT: IN THE MIDST OF THE FOREST

AT the moment that the town officer, giving over for the time the effort to capture Mistress Munch, returned to secure his other prisoners, Roger was already past the King's Armes, advancing as rapidly as was possible without calling dangerous attention to his speed.

The day was too cold for any idlers to congregate upon the streets, and the few men who were abroad walked as quickly as their age or the burdens they carried would permit. None molested him nor was there any sign of pursuit. Before the Maid had been left alone in the freezing atmosphere of her cell the Governor's door had opened to him.

Lady Phips rose as he entered, welcoming him with evident gladness, although her face was anxious.

"Build up the fire again Debby.—Here, Roger, draw a chair nearer the hearth. 'Tis fearful weather. I cannot keep my mind from dwelling on the storms of Pemaquid and the salvages. It hath been terrible too upon the sea. Surely Sir William should have returned ere this." She moved about in a fidgetting restlessness unlike herself.

Roger had not known her when as the young Widow Hull she had chosen to marry the poor and

half-educated ship carpenter, defying a social world aghast and snappishly protesting. But he honoured her the more for the tale, and had for her the personal liking and the deep respect felt by all who came beneath the charm of a quiet manner that made the direct glance of her clear grey eyes the more convincing.

He answered her with an attempt at reassurance, though his own mind was troubled at the delay.

"Sir William may be even now nearing the city," he said soberly.

"God grant it." Lady Phips seated herself by the blaze and looked down at the much worn letter she held in her hand. "He saith here, 'another month at the most', and 'twas then but late October. Thou hast a harrowed look, Roger. Hast thou ill news?" A startled expression followed on the words. "Sir William—there is no ill tidings——"

"Nay, Lady Phips, not of Sir William."

She interrupted with a sigh. "He hath been so much from home. I grow more timorous with each adventure. Hath the Lieutenant-Governor——"

"The Little Maid is locked in prison charged with witchcraft. The Commission meets to-morrow to pronounce upon her. Mr. Cotton Mather and Mr. Stoughton are determined on her death." Roger spoke each sentence slowly with a slight and pregnant pause after each. He was still standing.

Lady Phips rose quickly and confronted him. At first she uttered no words but fixed her eyes upon him in the amazement of unbelief.

"The Little Maid—in prison!" she repeated dully. "Will they dare hang a girl like that—O," she cried out with sharp recollection, "would that the Governor were here!"

"'Tis well for them he's not." Roger's eyes flamed with the sudden rage she had seen in Sir William's when the cause was terrible. "They'd not have dared lay hands on her had he been here."

"We must act for him," Lady Phips closed her fingers tightly on the letter she had folded and lifted the clear grey eyes to Roger's face. "What can we do?"

"Get her from the prison. They have kept her standing full five hours in the Town Hall. She will die of weariness and cold." Roger looked from the window as though to see if he were followed, and turned back to Lady Phips, the hopefulness of action strong in his vigorous movements.

"I will go at once and bring her here. Will the jailer deliver her to me?" Lady Phips was already on her way to the hall.

"If he does, she will be sent for by the fiends who placed her there, and if you refuse to give her up it will be used against the Governor and they will have their will by force. I, too, am accused and the constable is no doubt searching for me yet—I and Shubael Munch!"

"That great fellow that smells of musk. I cannot bear him."

"You do well. He attacked the Governor with the Maid. 'Tis he is their chief witness." Roger's hand clenched upon the chair post where it rested.

"'Tis his brother is accused—a child the mother picked up in her arms and carried from the place. We must be swift in planning. The moment 'tis dark I must be at the jail. To break in is scarce possible without bloodshed. The prisoners are well watched. 'Tis best to try an order for the Maid's release sent by you in the Governor's name."

"Thou wilt bring her here at once. I will conceal her," Lady Phips broke in.

"They will search here first and every house in Boston after. They are bent upon her death," Roger answered bitterly. "She hath an enemy here will keep the chase alive——"

"But where—what can you do?" She shook her head. "There's no other way."

"Flee. I know a place—I will not tell you where for you can then say truly that you know naught of it—but I can take her thither and she will be safe unless they follow. 'Tis a cruel journey for a maid." The harassed look deepened as he spoke.

Lady Phips had come close to him listening thoughtfully.

"She will need my storm cloak to protect her from the cold—and other things. How much canst thou carry?" she asked, eager to begin her task.

"Put in all that may give her comfort. The weight will be nothing," he answered quickly. "If we be pursued 'twill be time to cast it away."

"Hear me, Roger." Lady Phips laid her hand on the young man's sleeve in earnest confidence. "Go now to the Governor's room where there is ever a fire lighted against his return, and eat what Debby

will bring thee. If any demand thee go swiftly from the house and I will keep the constable in parley till thou be safe. Nopomuk shall carry to thee the packet with food and warmer wrappings for the Maid and thou must meet him in Gay alley as soon as it be fallen dusk. Eat heartily for thy strength may mean her life—and thine. If the jailer follow, Nopomuk will help thee put him off the scent.—But if he will not obey my order, what wilt thou do then, Roger?"

"For that I have a plan, but it were best thou knew'st naught of it, Lady Phips. If Nopomuk be kept to wait without the prison until it be accomplished fear nothing. An' I be taken, then will he bring the Maid to thee, and do thou send her with all speed to those whose names and place I will leave sealed for thee to open. But if Nopomuk brings news that all is well, burn the paper. I shall return to give thee word—soon. Sir William may then be here."

"Remember thou art dear to us, Roger, and the Maid the very apple of Sir William's eye. I shall ne'er forgive myself if——"

"Nay Lady Phips—'twould be certain death to stay in Boston. Be sure by now this house is watched."

Lady Phips looked in fresh alarm from the windows. "Go then; go now. I will bring the order. Thou wilt find pen and ink above in the Governor's secretary."

He waited an instant to hold fast her hands, and would have spoken as well, but she would not hear him.

"We need no words, dear lad. We will say all when we have saved her. Go quickly."

When the tipstaff, thumping his wand of office upon the steps, summoned the Governor's household to declare if aught had been seen of Captain Verring, Roger was again out of his reach, making careful haste from Snow Hill through the Old Way by the Mill Pond. The willows stripped of leaves, drooped in strands like witch hair, blown upon a rising wind. The drifts covered the berries and hid the crotch of the tree bent camel-wise upon the margin of the Pond, but a warmth rose about his heart as he followed the path the May had seen so full of fragrance and of loveliness, and he moved faster in the shadows toward his home.

As he neared the corner a dark object flung upon the snow lay directly in his way. He stooped to it wondering, and cried out grievingly. It was Felix, the black kitten, with twisted neck and staring yellow eyes, its soft black fur ruffled by the winter wind.

When he came forth from the house his face was stormy with new bitterness, but he gazed keenly about to detect the presence of a spy, and went forward steadily—save once, when, stopping to make sure he was not pursued, he looked back at the window of his mother's room, thinking a face was pressed against the pane.

A single star shone low down in the heavens and the wind was driving the clouds in huddled masses across the cold sky. Even the outlines of their hurrying shapes were vanishing in the void. It was

too cold for snow and the wind and darkness were better than stillness with a moon.

The town was at its early supper and here and there a solitary glint of candlelight shone out upon the snow from some kitchen window left unshuttered. It was after five when he demanded entrance to the prison. No light showed here, and the wind, rattling the heavy sashes in their frames and howling about the cold walls in loud abandon, seemed the only tenant. Nopomuk, waiting below the pillory, shivered, hearing the wind and the knocking and seeing nothing but the blacker mass of the stone pile within against the inkiness beyond.

"Who's without?" The jailer's voice sounded terrified, on the other side of the stout door.

"A messenger from the Governor's. Make haste. 'Tis chill here," answered Roger in a shout.

The key turned creaking and the bars dropped slowly.

"Enter quickly or the wind will douse my candle," called the voice and Roger wormed himself through the aperture the man left open, and stood upon the bare planks of the dismal hall. His hat was pulled low, and his cloak drawn well up against the cold. The flicker of the hempen wick was faint, and the jailer in haste to get back to his fire.

"Hold the flame whilst I get my spectacles," he commanded shortly. "What's this—what's this? 'Deliver Mistress Temple Armitage'—that's the witch! Two have been here to command me keep her safe. One was the Governor."

"The Lieutenant-Governor?"

"Aye—him. Said he was Governor while Sir William Phips was still away. This order be no good. 'Tis signed by Mary Phips. That's not the Governor." The man, blinked in the fantastic light and shook his head in a troubled fashion.

"Thou'lt find fast enough if it be good when Governor Phips returns! 'Tis said he is expected every hour. I would not give a leaf of new tobacco to be in thy shoes then. Best obey the order. Reads it not Mary Phips 'for the Governor'?" Roger thrust the tallow dip farther from himself and nearer to the paper.

"Aye—'for the Governor'. But that's not the Governor."

"'Tis the same. Look at the seal. 'Tis the Governor's. Think you Lady Phips knows not what she is about? Make haste. My Lady will like it little her messenger was delayed."

The jailer looked doubtfully at the paper, then thrust it into his coat as the cold set his teeth chattering.

"Come with me," he demanded shortly. "I like not facing witches in the night. 'Tis a ticklish business."

The short wick gave but a faint and doleful brightness to the dark corridors of the jail, and everywhere the strong draughts threatened to extinguish it. At a corner cell upon the floor above the jailer paused, handing his keys to Roger.

"The one that hath a red rag upon the loop of it. Open. I'll keep the candle for thee."

Roger fitted the key into the lock and turned it with a raucous grating that sounded no more dis-

tinct to him than the beating of his heart. The dim flare set the interior dancing before his eyes. There was no furniture, not even a stool, and the chill got hold upon the very bones. The touch of the door upon the bare hand seared like white coals. The beating of his heart stopped suddenly. But there was a movement within.

A figure had revealed itself among the shadows.

"An order from the Governor for the deliverance of Mistress Armitage. Come forth," commanded the jailer in a shout, "and get thee gone."

The man's courage had revived with Roger's presence and at the sight of the girl who had transformed herself neither into a cat nor any other beast to fly at him. The liquor he had drunk against the frost was in the bullying swagger of his voice.

"Have a care how you address her." Roger thrust him back as the Maid came out to them.

"O take me, too. Take me out, good masters," wailed a voice. "I starve with cold."

"'Tis Goody Burrill," explained the jailer. "'Twill be colder on Gallows Hill." He nodded grimly at his own facetiousness.

"Natheless it will fare but ill with you an' they find her perished here. 'Twere wise to bring her hot drinks and some protection from the air." Roger spoke with what temperance he might, fearing to jeopardize the Maid.

"Drinks—for a witch!" The jailer scowled. "Who are you, that hath such tenderness for these she-devils?"

Roger had held out his hand to lead the prisoner and the fingers that she laid in his were so icy his

clasp closed upon them with startled pain. The jailer had gone ahead, shielding his candle with a rough palm against the breezes that swept the corridor.

The old woman's voice was mumbling.

"Hast thou no place where this maid may be warmed ere she brave the winds without?" Roger asked as they descended. The girl clung to his hand with involuntary protest.

"Nay, let us go," she tried to say, but the words were broken with the shivering of her body.

The man who led them had hastened faster than she could follow, benumbed as she was with the long exhaustion of cold and hunger, but her will was quickly overcoming the paralysis. The jail-keeper listened with an angry growl:

"Lady Phips may warm her own witches," he said coarsely. "They'll get no heat from my fireside."

The girl's warning grasp restrained the answer upon Roger's tongue. He was well aware that the seal upon the letter was all that had convinced the man the order was not a forgery and even now there was a doubt in his rasping tones as they paused before the heavy door.

But at last the bar was raised, the key turned again, and they felt the delirious welcome of the wind that seized them in a maniacal embrace as if to draw them into its own uproarious delight.

Roger had thrown his cloak hastily about the girl's shoulders, and now sheltering her by the full resistance of his strength, led her onward across the street.

"Nopomuk waits us here," he explained. The Maid heard his rapid words in silence, understanding what must be done and assenting without argument.

"The—fur—boots," shouted Nopomuk. "She is—to put—them on——" He had appeared from the side of the pillory.

"Come this way—to Mr. Belknap's barn," Roger answered, speaking close to the Indian's ear, lest some night wanderer hear and follow.

In the angle made by a lean-to the girl essayed to eat and to swallow the cordial Lady Phips had sent. The storm-cloak was lined with fur, and the shoes Roger knelt to fasten upon her feet were also furred within and deeply soled. Before they set out he urged upon her again the potent cordial and she drank, trying to suppress the chills that took her in a hard shuddering. One after another Nopomuk had produced his treasures, and last, the package to be carried. It was of an awkward bulk but with the Indian's help the straps had been adjusted and now Roger thrust his hands, stiffened almost to uselessness, within their coverings, and the three moved out again into the full violence of the gale.

As they turned from North street, Nopomuk left them, assured that none had followed. The girl had quickened her pace more and more and now went swiftly, breasting the wind with a renewed and dauntless energy.

The storm caught them in its teeth and shook them with a vicious will, but the hand upon Roger's arm did not tremble. Whatever weakness had

overpowered her in the first moment of her deliverance, she had subdued it in the need for effort.

Once she spoke, and he bent to hear.

"'Tis terrible you should be so exposed—for me."

"'Tis the one blessedness of this vile cruelty. 'Tis terrible it should come to me through your—suffering." He pressed her arm closer, falling silent in the futility of words. Speech was well-nigh impossible where the blasts whirled the sound into space and took the breath from their lips.

At the river they came to a pause. The flood was flung into heavy waves by the gusts, and here and there a whitened crest showed in the blackness. The boat Roger would impress into his service was difficult to loosen from the ice in which it was embedded, its oars encased in a slippery rime. Once upon the water the darkness seemed to close more heavily about them, but virile strokes drove the firm craft straining toward the opposite shore and neither the wind nor the dark prevailed.

The woods made a cover from the blast and the early snows had barely hid the ground beneath the trees.

"When it is safe we will rest and have a fire." Roger spoke once more, setting a quieter pace for their going. "There is a spot a little beyond among the rocks."

She answered the anxiety in his tones with unfaltering confidence.

"I am warmer—— There is no haste for fire."

When the cry of the wolves came to them on the

crying wind she drew nearer, her hand tightening upon his arm, but her step went without wavering beside his, and the night that shut them in, wild and desolate as it was, brought to them keener happiness than the perfumed May.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THREATS FOR THE GOVERNOR

"THE Governor hath returned!"

"Thou art sure?"

"Aye. I saw him as I came. The expedition hath gotten back."

The morning after the flight the air was still and clear. The sun shone pleasantly and eased the grip of the cold. The two men who stood talking shouted at each other across Sudbury street. One was digging out the path before his door.

"What is that, Tobias?" Mr. Stoughton reined up his horse and leaned toward the wielder of the shovel. "Sir William Phips in Boston? I had no news of it."

"He hath but now reached his house, Sir." The man struck the shovel into the drift and advanced to the side of the sleigh. "I saw him as I came from delivering the milk to Mr. Henchman's place. Lady Phips, they say, fair wept for joy. Hath the constable caught Christopher Munch's boy? 'Twas said Mistress Munch had fled and the child with her."

"Good-morrow, Governor Stoughton." Sir Humphrey Wildglass, pausing beside them, lifted his hat with a respectful gesture.

Mr. Stoughton greeted him with a courteous relaxing of the muscles of his face and drove his horse nearer to the walk.

"Will you not ride?" he asked.

"I give you thanks, Sir. 'Twill be most agreeable, though I go but to Marlborough street."

The cavalier stepped blithely into the box of the wide vehicle and seated himself beside the Lieutenant-Governor, drawing the robes across his knees.

"'Tis a time of much anxiety for this colony and great stress for those who bear its burdens," he began with sympathy.

Mr. Stoughton's face relaxed still more.

"You are right, Sir Humphrey," he answered shortly.

"The courage to hold firm to hard and onerous duties is not every man's. I would not misjudge him who holds their Majesties' commission but I have thought it not altogether without divine purpose that one more strenuous should be at the helm in this crisis. I speak too frankly, it may be, but I have considered with great earnestness the Providence of the delay that holds Sir William at Pemaquid," he finished confidentially.

Mr. Stoughton regarded him in silence.

"It is a grievous time," he answered after a pause. "And it grows daily worse." He brought the whip down sharply upon the mare's back.

"Meets the Commission soon?" Sir Humphrey tucked the robes closer and smiled as the bells upon the harness broke into a cheerful peal at the suddenly accelerated pace. The horse was the finest of those that ran or plodded in the fast-awakening streets. It was truly a fair morning. Even the women who had come forth to do their purchasing chatted at the corners of the streets.

"The Commission, when doth it meet?" persisted Sir Humphrey.

Mr. Stoughton roused himself from a heavy preoccupation and the sleigh swung, lurching about, as they whirled into Queen street.

"I fear there will be opposition to the doing of a plain duty," he vouchsafed. "I would the executions had been over before Sir William Phips returned. He is come back."

Sir Humphrey's face lost its look of pious cheerfulness and he turned abruptly.

"He will interfere?"

"He will do more," said Mr. Stoughton grimly. "He will prevent the doing of justice to the Arch Enemy in the shape of Mistress Armitage and he will forbid all effort to discover Captain Verring or the boy. He may even find a way to let Goody Burrill go scot free to work harm among the righteous." His eyes snapped with cold fire. "The affair should have been hastened," he ended impatiently, "but Mr. Mather would first investigate on his own behalf and then go through the needless folly of examination. Had the Commission tried the cases we could have finished the executions ere now."

"I have no influence with Sir William Phips, but I bear certain secret commissions from their Majesties to urge great zeal in this stamping out of witchcraft. It might be well to lay these matters before the Governor."

Mr. Stoughton turned to him with some eagerness.

"Pray do so—and with all speed," he said.

Their steed, taking her own gait on the hill, had drawn up without guidance at the prison door. Mr. Stoughton did not get out, but waited, frowning toward the entrance.

Steps were heard within and the creaking of the key in the lock; then the jailer, a muffler about his head, came forth to them, an anxious expression on the features framed by the woollen scarf.

"Thou hast thy prisoners safe? They may shortly be required of thee," began the Lieutenant Governor peremptorily.

"It was right and regular—the order, Sir?" asked the jailer, coming nearer to the sleigh and speaking so the passers-by might not hear the words.

"What order?" Mr. Stoughton drew his brows close, the upraised whip held above the horse.

"Lady Phips's order in Sir William's name—and with the Governor's seal——"

"Order for what?" broke in Sir Humphrey. "Speak, fellow."

"To release Mistress Armitage——"

"Thou hast let Mistress Armitage escape?" Mr. Stoughton lifted his whip higher as if to bring it down upon the man's shoulders, but the jailer had taken himself quickly out of reach, and the Lieutenant Governor thought better of his impulse, snapping the lash furiously after the retreating figure. "Hear, thou varlet," he shouted. "This shall cost thee thy place. Come thou hither and answer my questions an' thou'dst not have worse befall thee. The end of them that have traffic with witches is one with theirs. Who took Mistress Armitage away?"

"A messenger from Lady Phips; a youth who commanded me as I had been his servant."

"Verring!" Sir Humphrey bit his lip, muttering something beneath his breath of which Mr. Stoughton caught but one word.

"'Game'! Aye he shall find others can play this Devil's game as well as he," he ejaculated harshly.

"'Tis Lady Phips deserves thy wrath, not me," quavered the anxious official. "I had no wish to set the beldame free."

"I go to the Governor. Will you attend me and make those representations whereof you spoke? They may have a weight with him, though he is but a hot-headed——" He stopped in time, turning the sleigh in the narrow space beside the pillory.

"You were not minded to be taken literally when you said that the Governor could prevent the execution?" asked Sir Humphrey quietly.

"He is pledged to accept the decision of the Commission, but I dare not trust to his obedience. A royal Governor hath power to thwart and delay the action of justice. All three," he broke out sternly, "let loose like firebrands to destroy——"

"The boy—the young lad Munch—surely he may be recovered to a better mind?" put in his companion. "I can see that the other two are vastly dangerous——"

Mr. Stoughton interrupted. "A witch is a witch. They should all three be hanged, and promptly."

The Governor sat smoking in his chamber. Lady Phips watched him and went to and fro, replenishing the fire with her own hands and stopping to set nearer to his hand the lacquered tobacco box or to lift a coal from the hearth to light the refilled pipe.

The Governor had been silent, anxious trouble brooding in his look, but half relaxed from battle with the elements.

"'Tis a fearful thing, Mary. Who knows—there may be others as innocent, perished by the Commission! But my Little Maid—and Roger too—I should have been in Boston." Anger rose again, mastering his thinking. "How dared they—Stoughton and Cotton M ther to make themselves the easy tools of Jacob Munch! I could throttle them for their fools' cru lty—the——"

"The Lieutenant Governor and Sir Humphrey Wildglass to see Sir William," announced Debby, entering upon her knock. "They wait below, Sir." She dropped a curtsey, her eyes brightening with contentment at his presence and went noiselessly away.

"Thou wilt remember, William." Lady Phips came closer to him, pleading. "Mr. Stoughton asks nothing better than to provoke thee to violence. 'Tis one thing to cane a King's officer for his insolence——"

"Fear not, Mary. This Sir Humphrey hath a tongue wily as Satan's. For the Maid's sake——" The Governor brought his fist upon his chair arm with resounding force.

"William—for my sake, too," his wife begged

anxiously. "Think how they seek excuse against thee with the King. Let not their wicked machinations come to aught. Be wise and give them no pretence."

"Be not anxious," he answered. "I have cost thee much in anxiousness," he added, shaking his head. "Think'st thou I'm worth it?" He laid his great hand sturdily upon the fingers that hindered him and smiled half ruefully.

"Aye, William, worth it a thousand times. There never was thy like. Go—lest Mr. Stoughton be angered that thou keep'st him waiting."

Lady Phips paced steadily to and fro, listening for a sign of quarrel, fearing much, for the greatness of the provocation, but all went with seeming smoothness, and the voices below sounded equally deliberate and well controlled. Debby came and went, bringing great sticks to wait their turn upon the gleaming andirons and the sun lay warm upon the hearth rug where a deer woven of red woollen rags bounded from a hunter whose gun seemed like to tangle in the tops of trees.

The minutes passed but slowly, and after ten were counted out upon her jewelled watch the anxious wife descended to the kitchen to prepare with her own hands the tray of spice cakes and glazed almonds with a posset of mulled wine to set before the enemies of her house. She watched Debby carry it to the parlour, and hesitated upon the stair, uncertain whether to interrupt the conference with greetings that would revolt her in the uttering, or to return and set herself to her abandoned sewing.

"You then refuse to fulfil the just and lawful

demands of your high office, Sir! The matter shall be laid before the Council——" Mr Stoughton's voice came to her, raised in a paroxysm of unmastered rage. "We shall see, Sir William Phips, whether thou wilt persist in this despotism. An' you put not the whole town on the track of these fugitives, and allow the law to accomplish its own vengeance upon their crimes you shall repent it!"

"'Twill surely appear to Governor Phips the wisest method to let this matter be brought to a lawful end. I myself am not without a personal grief in these events." Sir Humphrey paused, a most natural break in his even tones. "But 'tis my plain and most unpleasant duty, an' there be not strong measures taken to discover and put to trial all accused of witchcraft, to communicate these facts to their Majesties to whom I am sworn to make truthful report of all such matters. But I would not so report till I had laid the plain commissions before Sir William in his own person."

"Their Majesties—having good knowledge of Sir Humphrey Wildglass, and his incorruptible loyalty—will be vastly impressed!" The Governor kept his voice on a level that might not penetrate to the rooms above, but its unwonted deliberation of utterance was ominous.

"We are not here to listen to sneers nor taunts; we come for your plain declaration and we have it." Mr. Stoughton brought out the words with some triumph in the exasperation.

"You have my answer, and I stand by it." The Governor's voice was still kept rigidly to its level but the words rang soundly. "I must beg to hold

myself responsible neither to the Lieutenant-Governor, nor to the stranger who calls himself Sir Humphrey Wildglass, in the conduct of an office for whose faithful discharge I will answer to the King. If you have no further business, gentlemen, pray refresh yourselves ere you go forth again into the cold?"

Debby had set her tray upon the stand and slipped hastily away. The mulled wine brought an appetizing whiff upon the air and Sir Humphrey poured a cup of the steaming liquid and lifted it to his lips with a courtly genuflexion.

"I drink your better mind—and manners—Sir William," he murmured softly, sipping delicately as he spoke.

"I neither drink nor eat where evil practices be shielded and encouraged." Mr. Stoughton spoke again with the cold precision of his natural manner. "Look to yourself, William Phips, and your own household, lest the vileness you allow to wax fat in public be safely hiding at your bed and board. What spell and devilish enchantment may not be in aught beneath this roof——"

Sir Humphrey interrupted.

"Why warn him of that, Mr. Stoughton. He will scarce give you credence." The cavalier set the cup upon the tray and dropped the almond he picked up, as if the Lieutenant-Governor's words had much impressed him.

"Speak out and deal not in inuendoes." Sir William addressed himself to Mr. Stoughton, ignoring the other as if the sight of him roused an anger he might not control. "Would you revenge your-

self upon my faithful servants, accusing them because I will not yield? Speak if you be not afraid."

"Aye, Sir William Phips, I will speak and may God have mercy upon a soul set to thwart His will." Mr. Stoughton brought out his words with the careful, clipped utterance that seldom lost itself in any greater animation, "'Tis no servant, but one higher I accuse. Nor I alone. 'Tis the public that accuses. Who took out of the hands of the law a proven witch, compelling the jailer by a——"

"But Roger is already accused," the Governor interrupted. He was keeping his promise under terrible strain.

"Not Roger Verring—but Lady Phips," ended the precise voice.

The Governor took one step forward and Mr. Stoughton backed suddenly, upsetting the stand and the silver pitcher, that rolled against the cabinet beneath the gold cup glowing undisturbed within the ebony.

The Governor had flung the door wide and his face, that had been for an instant terribly convulsed, turned to them white and scorching in its fury.

"Begone!" he shouted. "Out of my sight!" The words shook the very foundations of the building and set the prisms jangling upon the candelabra swung above. "Faster, ye persecutors of the innocent—— Take your vile plots out of this house —and dare repeat within the limits of the universe this slander ye have uttered here and I will flay ye both alive and the King will hold me justified."

The door clanged on the hastily retreated figures. Even Sir Humphrey had not lingered upon his exit.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE HUT IN THE WILDERNESS

AT dawn of the Christmas morrow the wind had fallen in the woods as well, and the rising sun had glinted through bare branches with a prophecy of coming warmth.

Temple leaned more heavily upon Roger's arm. There were shadows under her wide eyes and signs of pain about the clean-curved lips.

Thrice they paused upon a hard ascent for her to gather strength.

"We might have come a shorter way but 'twas even rougher," Roger said, as much to himself as to the Maid, his face more worn than hers, so greatly her weariness oppressed him.

She smiled at him as if it had been most comfortable to feel one's way at night upon ledges and down steep hills, and to stumble through snow and cold where the whole garrison of the darkened forest flocked to hinder passage.

Her smile eased the trouble of his thoughts. "'Twas better this way and we have the light for the worst climb of all," she said.

"'Tis but little farther. Beyond the brow here, unless I have forgotten." Roger glanced eagerly about him as they went on. "Aye, and there's the smoke from the chimney now."

The girl's eyes grew moist in the relief, and they mounted the rest of the way in silence.

In the little clearing on the farther side the snow lay almost untrodden, and about the log house set beneath them the smoke was the only evidence of habitation.

At Roger's knock there was a startled sound, then eyes peered through a slide within the door.

"'Tis Roger Verring, Mother Lindwell. We be——"

The door swung quickly open and eager hands drew them into the dark interior.

"Merciful save us, Roger, an' what bring'st thee here. Hast married a Quakeress and run away? Thou'st frozen her—— Poor thing—poor thing. There, there, my dear, sit here till I can warm thy hands."

The woman who had admitted them guided the girl to a rough settle and pushed Roger away when he would help about the fastenings of her hood and cloak.

"Nay, see to thyself. I'll tend to her," she said.

The room was close and the warm air set chilled flesh stinging with pain almost unbearable. The girl's fingers were too stiff to be of use and the woman worked over her as if she had been a baby, pausing only once to look up at Roger with sharp little eyes that missed nothing in their search.

"Art clean fordone, lad, and hast frosted thy cheeks. Here Trott, bestir thy bones. Get snow for Master Roger, and thaw the frost out." A silent figure rose from the other end of the settle, deposited a child that wailed at being left, and went forth obediently.

"'Tis hungry," the mother explained shortly. "I fear me, Master Roger, thou'st come to an ill place, for we be well-nigh starved. Naught but dried corn and a bit of hog's fat in two weeks, and Trott laid by with a rheum and cannot go hunting and none to venture nigh Boston for us! 'Tis a sorry thing being a Quaker's wife in these days when they would as soon kill thee as say it."

"We be in worse case yet," said Roger, "and Mistress Armitage fled for her life. Lady Phips got her forth of the prison and commissioned me to bring her to thee. The Governor is not yet back from Pemaquid."

"Monstrous—a maid like that!" The listener had drawn off the furred boots, cut to rags upon the roots and stones of the way, and sprang up suddenly. Temple had put out her stiff hand to soothe the wailing infant and the motion had sent the blood too quickly on its reanimated way. She leaned helplessly upon the goodwife's breast and slow tears of weakness wet her cheeks. One hand clung like a child's upon the woman's sleeve, and at that touch Mother Lindwell gathered the girl close and crooned over her in a tender murmur, forgetting the brisk sharpness of her accustomed manner.

"Here Trott, get down the bed. Make haste. The maid is faint for sleep. Hast thou bread or meat?" She put the question to Roger anxiously.

Roger had laid out the flasks and the remaining food upon the wide shelf that served for table, and the woman, tucking the girl tenderly about, set herself to toast a fragment of the wheaten bread.

The man looked wistful and the little one cried, for hunger.

Roger put into its hands a broken slice and it sat up and ate, forcing bites upon the father who nibbled gingerly, and glowed with delight as the child sighed in a kind of rapture and fell asleep in his arms.

The Maid was drowsy and would neither eat nor drink.

"I would sleep," she protested. The goodwife finally ceased to strive with her, drew the covers more warmly over the reclining figure, and left her lost already in the dim labyrinth of dreams.

The windows were narrow, mere slits in the logs, nailed over with oiled paper and, all save one, shuttered against the cold. The light came chiefly from the fire and revealed the barren interior in bursts and flashes of its glare. The table shelf, the bed lowered on hinges from the wall, the settle, and rude stools upon the hearth, were well-nigh all the furniture, and made, like the house, here in the woods. The rafters that should have hung with strings of dried apples, bunches of onions, and wild herbs for medicine were bare save for the central beam that bore the unhusked corn; the rough cupboard nailed beside the fire held a couple of wooden bowls, spoons made of shells clamped in split sticks, and an iron toasting fork. Upon a greenwood crane over the fire hung a pot that boiled noisily, cooking nothing, but filling the chimney-side with steam.

Mistress Lindwell talked eagerly with Roger, bustling about to set the fragments of his own feast

more tidily upon the board. The wheaten bread she kept apart, saving it for the Maid, but the rest she urged on him.

"Eat it, and get strength to go forth and hunt for us! Trott there will be a new man for e'en a bite of venison," she said. "Eat and sleep, lad. Thee've circles so deep under thy eyes they're fair sunken away."

"Nay, Mother Lindwell, eat, thyself, and make Trott finish the little there be. I've had food already and am not hungry. I, too, but want to sleep."

He rolled himself within the skins she threw upon the floor, but before he slept he raised his head to speak again.

"Sir William and Lady Phips hold Mistress Armitage dear as if she were their own! I know there's naught thou and Trott here would not do—even to the last crumb within the wallet—were she wholly friendless, but 'tis no harm ye should know the Governor will not forget this kindness."

"Go to sleep, boy. Think'st thou we'd do for Governor Phips what we'd not do a thousandfold for thee who rescued us, and saved my baby when we fled. And who that had seen the Maid would not welcome her for her brave self, I'd ask to know? Would ye were man and wife! It was ill fortune that sent a maid forth so alone. The gossips will——"

Roger sat up and looked at her pleadingly. "Thou'lt not let her be troubled by fears of gossips? She hath had enough to bear!"

"Go thou to sleep. Try not to teach thy Mother

Lindwell what to say to maids. Tell me who accused the girl."

"The Munches first of all."

"I remember them—aye, old Christopher and the galoot that wore the spangled doublet—mean and croping all of 'em—and full of enviousness and bile. There was a maid amongst them also?" But Roger did not answer and the woman softened her tones, taking her little one and crouching on the settle by the flames.

"Art in great pain, Trott? I knew it, and I sent thee after snow! I will rub thy shoulder with the bear's grease and do thou heat it in. Man—man, what can we do about the sleeping! 'Twill be the evergreens on the floor for us, the loft for Roger, and the Maid's cloaks will help to keep her warm."

"She is wondrous lovely," said Trott quietly. "I'm glad the lad could save her."

The Maid scarce woke for four and twenty hours. When she rose at last and sat upon the edge of the bed, pushing back the soft hair tumbled on her forehead, the baby laughed within a pile of bearskins on the hearth, and savoury odours floated from the bubbling pot, swung low upon the yielding crane.

"Where is Captain Verring? Hath he gone?" she asked.

"He is without, getting for me the wood to keep us warm. The snow hath covered it and the goodman grows worse each time he makes the attempt," answered her hostess cheerfully. "'Twas a Heaven-sent sleep thou's had, my child."

"But you—where did you sleep? I have taken

your bed!" The girl came forward, seeming taller and more beautiful still in the low room. She put both hands upon the goodwife's arm and held her fast. "You and your husband have done all this for one who is a stranger. And you yourselves are ill and anxious! Now I will be of use. Captain Verring shall see 'tis not a man only may be useful."

"'Tis blessed good to have thee here," the woman answered in an impetuous burst. "Thou's no idea how lonely 'tis here in these woods, and Trott and I were ever used to neighbours. Thou'rt useful Mistress, just to stay with us!"

The day was blithe and the strangeness of this refuge made but the more delight. The baby fastened upon Temple and would not let her go, and Trott's aching arms were thereby greatly eased.

"'Tis a fine world when thou hast a warm chimney corner and thy mother and father near, little Peace, is't not!" the Maid said gaily, tossing the child to the smoky beams. Then she fell sober and held the tiny one upon her knee, watching the fire in a sad quietness, coming forth from her reverie in still gayer mood.

But the blame of a hostile world found her even here and the blitheness wore away or grew more forced. Even Mistress Lindwell was openly troubled at the flight together. Who knew what rumour might not have said! And the Maid became first sorrowful, then indignant. Did Roger repent his words before the judges? She grew scarlet with remembrance. Should she have protested, refused

to come with him? Had he found her but too ready to trust—and follow? It was plainly his duty to show her that he was still of the same mind.

And Roger, remembering that he had said publicly to her enemies that which was hers alone to hear, doubted if the words had not revolted her. Her former distance had not been explained and he wondered if she longed, here in the midst of this rough friendliness of the Lindwells, for the polished homage of Sir Humphrey. As she grew constrained he grew more silent and held more aloof. Surely it was hers to show whether or no his love had angered her!

The snows fell heavily and the scanty supply of corn was near an end. The deer were few and the hunting alone could not provide them with what would keep the soul within the body. He thought the Maid looked thinner and beneath her mirth there seemed to him to lurk a baffling sadness.

The privations she endured cost him daily more suffering. She had conquered the goodwife by invincible persistence—and by the picture of Trott grown worse or dying—and now she slept upon the evergreens. The bundle of Lady Phips had held a truly marvellous array, yet he knew how much of what had been to her but daily decencies she must forego.

Temple woke one morning to hear the Quaker's wife protesting staunchly.

"Not yet, Roger. We can do with what we have till thou hast shot more rabbits or the deer return. They're sure to kill thee if thou go now."

The girl arranged her hair, bathed her face in the warm snow water, and throwing her cloak about her, stepped out into the light.

Roger's face brightened as he saw her.

"What is it, Captain Verring? What would you do?" she asked in visible alarm.

"Make a little journey. I shall shortly return," he answered, his eyes resting on her with a grave wistfulness, of which she blindly marked but the gravity.

"You go to Boston?"

"Oh beg him not to go—he will listen to thee," implored the woman. "Think on those who love him if he's hanged. 'Twill kill Madam Verring. Bid him not to go."

The Maid hesitated.

"I fear Captain Verring would heed me little, but I would he might remain. I do ask him for us all."

Roger misinterpreted the words and look as she had misread his. To go was best, but he had hoped for some vague sign to ease his jealousy or show him she forgave what had offended her. But goodwife Lindwell stayed by them in her fear for Roger, and did not guess the pain beneath the calmness of their brief farewell.

## CHAPTER XXX

### AN ENCOUNTER AND AN ACCIDENT

WHILE the Maid ate her parched corn and slept upon the evergreens, smiling through all as bravely as in the first day of their exile, and hiding the hurt that made hardship a relief from thought, Boston discussed her and her absence, making large capital of scandal or romance.

Nicolas Verring and Alison grew older in the hearing and scourged their souls in the strong misery of their credence of the tales.

In the streets and behind the doors shut fast for fear and secrecy, excitement ebbed and flowed. The return of the Governor had infused a more wholesome quality into the life of the town, but the madness had not run its course. Fear and fanatic rage still overpowered the growing force of protests that had risen upon the rabid wantonness of accusation. No man's life was safe and dread of the accuser counteracted terror of the supernatural. Captain Alden had broken jail and taken himself off, with a nimbleness unexpected of his seventy years, at the very moment when a praying band were met within his own house to cast out the evil spirit that enchained him. None knew whither he had gone but it was plain so long as he remained away he and his goods were safe. To come back would be death.

In the days of his return to the horror-smitten town, in the long hours of enforced hiding and

delay, Roger endured much that was more wearing than the privations of the wood, and his heart burned with the live coals of his fears about the Maid. The coldness of their parting lay hard upon him and he grew sick with the certainty that if Sir Humphrey were to follow her she would rejoice to see him.

In his spy-hindered labours Nopomuk aided him, and through Lady Phips he gathered by night the stores he was to carry. She, too, had need be careful, for many eyes watched every purchase, informers were set upon the household, and the servants plied with threats and questions by those who sought the Maid.

At last a morning came when he would wait no longer. The hour for Nopomuk's nightly visit was long since past and, therefore, dark though it was, some one must have followed. The sun was rising.

Roger crept from the heavy robes concealed among the rocks and examined in all directions before he began his toil. Then he unearthed his stores, packed them skilfully and strapped them with leather thongs. Before he lifted them to place the burden upon his shoulders he raised his eyes once more to search the forest.

"A fine morning, Captain." Sir Humphrey had seated himself upon a rock and looked about with cheerful interest. "Thou'st chosen a charming woodland for thy stroll."

Roger set the pack upon the ground and stood up with a movement so sudden Sir Humphrey drew his hand from beneath his cloak.

" 'Tis loaded and my aim hath been commended," he said indifferently. The heavy pistol pointed without wavering. Roger faced it with no change in his expression, but his thoughts moved quickly from point to point of possible escape.

"Pray let me not interrupt," went on the voice of the cavalier. "I'm in the mood myself for strolling. We'll go together."

Roger returned to his task, lifting his heavy pack and fastening it with quiet deliberation as if he either had not heard the other's words, or would make no contradiction of their import.

"Lead, and I'll follow close upon thy steps," the voice commanded. " 'Tis said I have a somewhat hasty temper. An' we come not within a reasonable time to the destination thou'd selected there'll be one witch defender less in pious Boston. 'Tis time we started. For what sweet inspiration dost thou linger?"

Roger looked at the cavalier, then at the pistol as if irresolute.

"If 'tis the Indian thou expectest, he vanished in witch smoke when he saw me upon his track some half-mile distant. But from there the way was easy. A Providential trail of footsteps guided me to thy present cover. For which mercy I was not ungrateful." Sir Humphrey had risen from the rock.

Roger frowned, seeming to find the yielding inevitable, and moved forward at a sharp angle from the direction of the Quaker's house.

"Make not detours too long for patience, Captain. I am inclined for strolling, but would not waste my

breath. So look to it an' thou wouldst not leave this world—and thy Enslaver to be consoled, it may be, by thy enemies!—And die thou shalt, if thou deceive me." The last words dropped the lightness of the bantering tone.

Still Roger made no reply, but kept a good pace that lengthened gradually as he advanced. Upon a slight rise in the rough ground the trail he followed turned at right angles, skirting a low bluff that gave a sheer plunge down its hidden bank. Of this the other had no knowledge.

Roger's increasing stride had left him some six paces in the rear. Discovering the widening distance between them and that a clump of evergreens would shortly intervene, the cavalier quickened his step and, as Roger vanished around the angle of the rock, he was instantly upon him. The pistol, knocked into the air, fell beneath the ledge and the two men grappled in the entrance of the path. The older man was not unskilled, his resistance was desperate, powerful. Pebbles rolled from beneath their feet and rattled into the hollow where the jutting boulders had kept the ground clear of the snows. Hearing the tumbling stones Sir Humphrey leaped quickly back from what seemed the edge of a precipice, setting his feet upon what was its actual verge. A twig slipped under him and he fell heavily, crashing upon the broken edges of the rocks below.

Roger slid and clambered rapidly down the farther end of the short descent. Here the trees gave a hold and the brief precipice ended in a slope.

"Hast scored again, my doughty Puritan. Thy

pasty-faced accusers have the right of it." Sir Humphrey looked up, helpless, his lips bitten hard from pain. "'Twas some damned wizardry that sunk this pitfall."

Roger unstrapped his pack in haste, bestowing it out of sight beneath a hemlock.

"I believe thou art relieved, thou fool, to find me living. What a pother is a Puritan's righteousness." The injured man writhed a little over, moving his arm to reach his side, but Roger was before him.

"I will bear your rapier; you but put yourself to greater suffering by motion." He quietly removed the short sword, picked up the pistol and laid both upon his pack. "I would not cause you needless pain," he went on, returning to the wounded man, "but know I must if you can walk. 'Tis needful precaution in my absence." He examined his fallen enemy as tenderly as might be, assuring himself of broken bones and showing, spite of inward rage, a certain sympathy for the evident suffering of his foe.

At the word *absence* Sir Humphrey had looked up searchingly.

"The highway is close at hand. I will return," Roger reassured him coldly.

Sir Humphrey left to himself swore with violence, but his face welcomed Roger's return with the sneering smile with which he had seen him go.

"Art welcome, sweet Samaritan," he cried. "I've nigh drained my flask in waiting and the rocks be hard as well as chill. Who is thy genial friend?"

The solemn-visaged farmer who followed Roger

looked with dour compassion upon the fallen man and set about preparing a litter of thick boughs. The cavalier made no complaint in the journey but the sweat of doleful agonies stood upon his forehead as he was laid at last upon the rude couch in the farmer's cabin.

"I will resume our stroll some other day," he gasped meaningly, as Roger left him.

Roger paused at the threshold.

"Pray risk not your recovery by too much haste," he said unmoved.

"Here thou, quick!" The cavalier summoned the dour-faced host with a shout. "Pursue the man and hold him. He is a witch escaped from Boston. The town is searching for him. Take thy gun. He will be armed."

The man seized his musket and vanished on the word, running for the woods, but Roger had run faster. At the bluff all trace was lost save the footprints approaching from above. A rabbit whisked across the snow. The man watched it with startled eyes and fired his musket at the spot where it had disappeared. Then he turned and made his way back to his groaning guest.

"He turned himself into a rabbit and the ball went through him harmless," he reported. "'Tis strange a witch animal hath no tail!" He wagged his head.

"But a rabbit is ever without a tail, thou oaf," retorted Sir Humphrey angrily.

Roger waited till the man was well away, and descended cautiously from his hiding place. Keeping a sharp eye upon the approaches to the hollow,

he bound his bundle again upon his shoulders and set forth, walking backward in the tracks made by Sir Humphrey and himself. At a point where they had crossed a frozen brook blown almost clear of snow he set his face once more toward the Quaker's dwelling, moving forward rapidly wherever he had not first to sweep clear the trackless ice.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### KIDNAPPED

"SOON now, we must let thee go!" Mistress Lindwell sighed. She was making earnest effort to sew by the troubled light that penetrated the narrow rectangles of oiled paper, and her eyes winked rapidly as if protesting at their task. The women were alone. The sound of the Quaker's saw came to them from without the house. "How long is't since thee came to us? 'Twould seem no longer than yesterday to me," went on the goodwife, drawing her needle swiftly.

"'Tis many weeks—this will be Captain Verring's fifth journey to the town," broke in the girl. "How long I've tried your goodness!"

"The trial's yet to come, when we must let thee go! And Roger—O 'twill be grievous lonely without ye! Even a day like this when he be away is longer. Dost remember how it dragged—the time—when he made that first trip to find us food?"

"You will see him often. Happy days be coming for thee and goodman Trott. There'll soon be end of hardship and loneliness for both." The Maid spoke cheerfully.

"Well, we've need of them, for now young Joliff be gone, there's none we can trust to fetch and carry from the town, and once Nicolas Verring gets Roger again in the counting-house there'll be

precious few hours to him for running of our errands!" Mistress Lindwell appeared somewhat heartened, spite of the lamentation of her words.

"Do you, in truth, hold that this madness of the people about the witchcraft will pass? I cannot trust it. You did not see them!" The Maid stopped, troubled. "If my Uncle Amory would but hasten his coming he might get me forth to England. I am a danger here to all who harbour me." The girl sighed in her turn, moving to and fro a forked stick for little Peace to peep through and play owl-in-the-woods.

"There now, I've caught thee!" The goodwife laughed. "All thy fine words of cheer be for me and the sadness is heavier on thee than on us. I knew it, well." She looked up across her stitching.

Temple "hooted" once more through the twigs and the child answered with a startling "wh-oo-oo" much trilled with mirth.

The Maid smiled. "I must have my little melancholies and make my little wail, dear Mother Lindwell, else should I forget how to be in the fashion. To be sometimes sighing bespeaks a weighty mind."

"Pooh—a dry leaf for the sighing!—and dear at that! 'A weighty mind'! A laggard stomach more like!" The woman's eyes twinkled over her task. "'Tis thy good honest pluck makes me most admire, I tell thee. Thou art so young and hast had such sadnesses and yet, give thee but one pale ray, and thou mak'st a sunrise!"

Temple smiled with humorous amusement.

"Where dost keep such rose mirrors to reflect

thy friends withal!" she began mirthfully, growing much in earnest as she talked. "I wonder if it hath come to thee that 'twould be dull metal did not reflect the good cheer of thy own quick spirit!"

"I'll not say nay. I love flattery—an' it be warm with some goodwill." Mistress Lindwell bit off her thread. "What luxury not to use ravellings, and to have more than one needle," she went on again. "Roger is terrible thoughtful. Luxury! And what dost suppose it hath been to me to chat so over nothings with a woman! 'Tis seldom men know how to settle to a bit of talk. They must be ever bobbing up to use their arms and legs, and get no flavour from the trifles that rest the tongue!"

Temple laughed again, for Trott, coming from without, stood in the doorway and observed his wife with such reposeful zest that she looked up and straightway set him to another task.

He nodded his head at the Maid. "A woman, Temple Armitage, that hath a busy mind and chooseth the right husband may set him 'bobbing up' for two," he said in his slow, comfortable speech. "Not so, Peace; come from the door, or help me to shut it. When I pull, then push thee hard, within," and he departed, still nodding as if inwardly repeating his own jest.

As night came on and Peace was taken from her arms, so fast asleep undressing could not stir the fallen lids, the Maid left the house to stand in the tree-circled clearing and watch the stars appear. The days were well companioned, but the nights, that began so early, were lengthened out of all proportion to their hours. The close contentment of

the two who worked together in the house, preparing for the supper half forgotten in the excitement of the sewing, made her in this time of Roger's absence more than ever lonely.

Every day she had grown more scornful of herself that she could not even pluck a winter fern without longing for him to share delight in its brave greenness. It had been given to her to love greatly, but the stronger the force of her love the more it built high walls for shield, dwelling where it could neither admit another nor show itself without strong and startling reason.

Not even Roger guessed how wholly this was true of her and that she could feel as he and yet leave his words, so clearly spoken, as if they had not been. Did she care, surely some gate she would leave open for approach, some reassurance of those words her love would crave. But all gates she barred, and he could not urge on her more of a presence already too much forced upon her by events.

In the despair of these days that might have held a fuller comradeship than the town could give them, he made frequent excuse for journeys, that he might irk her less, hoping for some betrayal of gladness at his return.

To her these absences were proof of the dreariness he found in their unwilled seclusion, and her welcome grew more staid, more bravely indifferent with each. As the time came for Sir Humphrey to be well again, the fear of her ill-protected isolation drove Roger to seek more earnestly means for her safe return. Under Sir William's roof she

would at least be safe from Sir Humphrey Wildglass, and malice itself must at last be silenced among the accusers. Already the jails were emptying and the exiled everywhere looking hopefully toward home.

The Maid herself had only dread for a return that meant but separation more complete, and the sight of all that could bring to her the evil days before the flight. It was for that she sighed, playing at owl-games with little Peace. She felt assurance that Roger would come from this latest absence saying that she might go back, and a homeless desolation stared at her. Even the thought of Richard Amory, too long away to be more than a vague and chilly refuge for a lonely girl, gave her small comfort. Doubtless to him she would be but an incubus! Better the morbid bitterness and the woods than to be herself again, and go radiant about the stupid business of more active days in town.

This thought was with her as she entered the house again, and it was this that held her yet when Trott drowsed on the settle, and the goodwife, wearied, dropped beside the child.

It was from the smart of it that footsteps woke her. The fire was dim, but the whole room brightened with the belief that it was Roger.

She went swiftly to the door and flung it wide. For the first time a welcome betrayed itself in her exclamation. But the figure that brushed by her was not Roger. She spoke again quickly, rousing the Quaker from his doze. Mistress Lindwell had started up from her couch, calling out instantly, as if she had not slept.

"Who is it?" Temple asked, challenging the intruder.

The fire blazed higher. The man had unclasped his cloak, letting it fall upon the settle, and now he tossed his hat upon it, sinking beside them as if exhausted.

"Sir Humphrey Wildglass!" the girl cried, as the light fell upon him. "What do you here?"

If she felt fear it was disarmed by his apparent weakness.

"I was strolling," he answered involuntarily. "Truly, I crave pardon. I have been ill and my—stroll—hath much fatigued me."

It was more than the strolling that fatigued Sir Humphrey. He had quarrelled vigorously with the Lady, who waited upon the rocks above the house, savagely in haste for action.

"You've deceived me again," he had complained with uncurbed fury. "I get the men, stout fellows for the work and ready to keep a bargain, and am prepared. Keep you out of it. Wait and see ye're not fooled an ye will, but leave the work to us!"

"I'm like to have dragged myself this dismal way at night to leave command to thee, thou fool. For what am I here, think'st thou! 'Tis I command. Obey strictly if 'tis the reward disquiets thee—— 'Twill be thine an' thou obey'st. Wait here with thy fellows." Sir Humphrey would have left them but the other had detained him roughly.

"Stay thou here thyself. Let me kill her. There's no safety of reward till she be dead. I'll not trust ye——"

"Wait here, I say," Sir Humphrey interrupted, turning fearless and masterful upon the danger. "Or go yonder. There's but one entrance. Canst see from there if we escape. She shall not be harmed villain. Dost hear me! She's to go in safety with us if the reward's to follow. Mayhap she'll come of her own will. I may persuade her——"

"Ye're to kill her, my men, 'tis the only way to make sure of the money——" broke in the Lady again.

The four who waited near at hand had crowded closer.

"'Tis a sure way to lose it. An ye'd have the gold ye must obey." Sir Humphrey drove them back. "Wait ye—— And heed if I call," he added to the Lady, then set his back to them and began groping down the rocks toward the house.

"Know'st thou to-morrow's morrow will be thy birthday, Frances?" he asked now suddenly.

The Maid had set her hands together, clasping them sharply in the shadows where she stood.

"Fear not to speak. Thou know'st who thou art and I know. These good people will not harm thee. Surely thou need'st not fear thy cousin." Sir Humphrey had risen as he talked. His bones had knitted well and the soreness of unused muscles was the only remembrancer of tedious weeks.

The girl came into the light of the fire and looked at him earnestly.

"Why are you here?" she asked.

"To save thee. The Boston men are on thy

track. Thy hiding place is discovered." He sank upon the settle again, playing the role of illness cleverly. "We must make haste. These two will not betray us?"

He glanced at Trott, who stood defiant and unquakerlike beside them.

"Not half so soon as I would betray myself," the girl answered promptly. Sir Humphrey had seen that his blow struck home. The trial, the prison, were fresh in her mind. Hope stirred itself in him.

"Come," he said again.

"With you?" She looked at him without stirring.

"None could better care for thee. But the time is short."

"Whither would you take me?" The girl watched him, and saw that he was not so ill as he appeared. There was small weakness in the movement that brought him beside her as she seemed to yield.

"The *Soldan* sails by dawn. I will conceal thee on her. To stay in the country is death." He saw the meaning of her look and went on quickly. "An' thou dread'st the sea I have safe hiding place not far from here. Goodwife, get her cloak and hood. She is not safe an instant, nor you while she is here."

"How know we the tale be true?" demanded Temple. "Where be these men? How had you knowledge of them?"

"I passed them on the way. I heard in Boston of their attempt and followed, eluding them." Sir Humphrey waited, questioning her faith.

"I do not believe the tale," Temple answered;

turning from him to the others, who listened credulous and bewildered.

The cavalier went softly to the door and peered forth, as though regarding the sky.

"If thou wilt take thy stand beside me and let thy gaze wander while thy head is still lifted as in transport at the moon, thou'lt see them," he said rapidly, his tones carefully suppressed. "There be figures beneath the trees yonder."

She joined him instantly. The Lady and his followers had stationed themselves where they held the doorway in full view and the moonlight revealed them. She drew back into the room.

"I will not go with you," she said steadily, "but I will go forth to them. Then will they not molest my friends."

She reached for her cloak and pulled it about her shoulders, but as her fingers went to the fastenings Mistress Lindwell interfered. The husband had placed himself directly before the door that Sir Humphrey had closed.

"Temple Armitage, thee'll stay here," he said, his calm eyes on the girl. "Mount into the loft quickly. I will parley with them. Thee doth not trust this man who saith he is thy cousin?"

Temple looked from one to the other of her defenders anxious and determined.

"I do not trust him," she said, "but I would almost go with him, though I believe he seeks my life, rather than ye be exposed—and the child. We must think on Peace."

Sir Humphrey waited before the fire, listening as at a comedy.

"It lies with thee to choose twixt peace and war, Frances." His smile changed as his eyes rested on her. "An' thou'd been a man the name of Bellingham had not died inglorious!" he interjected. "'Seek thy life'! An' thou think'st that, thou knowest little—— At this instant, as worse fortune may yet prove, I risk my own for thine! Nay, child, doubt not. I have coined many falsehoods —and better mintage than most—but love lies not. 'Tis not by will of mine I have lost power, even power to lie! Look at me, Frances——" He approached, entreating eagerly—"Dost thou doubt I love thee!" The fire showed him briefly, a swift presentment of what he might have been.

"I cannot learn in one hour to undo a long distrust." The girl spoke gently. "Even if I believed the words, I could not go—— Pray do not let us waste the time endangering these." Her eyes went back to the Quaker and his wife.

But he remained still pleading, in his eagerness bending passionately near. As he talked the watchers gazed fascinated at the two, so like in this changing firelight that the resemblance seemed uncanny.

"O if Roger were here!" cried out Mistress Lindwell, then bit her tongue, remembering the men without.

The girl was cold, troubled, eager for escape from protestation; Sir Humphrey absorbed, besieging her distrust by all there was of him of fervour and address. He pleaded eloquently, well. His roused look, warm with conquering emotion, clung to her with the full energy of his intent.

Upon Mistress Lindwell's cry for Roger he stopped, and the ardour of his gaze became a jealous question.

The girl's colour rose hotly under it, an answer stronger than her will.

He stood more straightly, facing her. "Wilt thou come?" he asked again.

She shook her head in quick refusal. In her silence was the pain of the betrayal he had evoked.

He left her, took up his cloak and hat, and opened the door. Master Lindwell stood back to let him pass; but he went no farther than the threshold. At his signal, the men under the trees moved forward into the clearing, and before those within had understood, the five were in the room.

"Touch not the maid. Bind these," he commanded,—"but hurt them not." He had stepped once more to the girl's side.

"Wilt thou come now, or must I take thee by violence?" he said.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE PURSUIT

AT the moment when Temple thought she heard his footsteps approaching the log house, Roger stood waiting in the hall of the Governor's mansion while Debby went to fetch still one more package for his carrying.

" 'Twill rejoice Sir William mightily to have ye both again," Lady Phips was saying. " 'Twill be proclaimed ere long—and return will then be safe enough for all. There is no question. Mistress Munch came back from hiding yesterday, bringing the boy. They say 'tis a scandal the way he is indulged—as like now to be ruined for too much petting as formerly for unkindness. Gossip hath it the woman is much chastened in spirit, but quarrels with her daughter who hath been somewhat slighted since men suspect not all of those accused were guilty."

Roger had tried more than once to interrupt.

"I must go, Lady Phips. Sir Humphrey hath been seen in Boston this very day. I fear——"

"Thou shalt go; Debby will be here in a minute. Thou'rt thinner with all this trouble, Roger." She fixed on him her grey eyes, searching as the Governor's were shrewd, and went on quickly, "And thou'rt not the only one's grown thin." She smiled. " 'Tis said Sir John Winchcombe's figure hath sadly fallen away, and that he curseth Sir

Humphrey Wildglass for a knave. Nay more, he threatens him—though I misdoubt me if Sir Humphrey be much disquieted. Madam Chanterell hath been to plead with me! She fears, it seems, the wrath of Richard Amory who rewarded them liberally for safety to the Maid. Sir John hath been extravagant and his fortunes be low. I like not the woman, but had she been alone——"

"I *must* go—— Never mind the packet. She herself will be here—to-morrow, it may be——"

"But I hear Debby now," Lady Phips began.

"A man without must see you instantly, my Lady." Debby's scared face appeared within the door.

"Lady Phips—where is thy mistress——" The voice that followed, Roger knew.

"Roger"—it began joyfully at sight of him, then with the suddenness of a pistol shot—"Where is the Maid?"

"At the Quaker's house—What is't Maccartey?"

The answer came at the same instant with the question. "Sir Humphrey's there—or on the way. I got it at the Ship Tavern—a sot that blabbed what—— Come. Thou'lt tell the Governor?" He turned to Lady Phips.

"I'll send messengers——" she began.

Roger was already without the house. "Tell him to follow—the New Trail," his voice came back to her.

"The man hath a dozen with him."—Maccartey's shout as the two disappeared.

It was a grim race for the sailor. The younger man outstripped him much. Roger did not wait

nor look behind. When he stumbled headlong across the sill of the cabin he could not speak, but cutting swiftly the Quaker's bonds, he listened.

"Toward the New Trail by Miller's pasture and Spot Pond. An hour agone, lacking the quarter." The Quaker pointed as he spoke. "There be six men."

Sir Humphrey's captured pistol lay, still, upon the shelf above the cupboard. Roger seized it and was gone.

"They have the start but we shall find them; they'll go more slowly with the Maid," he said as he came upon Maccartey. He panted less fiercely.

"More quietly for a space—and hear me," he went on. "'Tis like they're on the New Trail. Dost remember the Devil's Nippers?"

"I know not the New Trail," answered his companion, striding more quickly.

"'Tis a deep cut where the rocks be split apart and the path goes at the bottom. At the far end but one or two may pass at once.—Faster than this an thou canst, Maccartey.—We'll pass them, an' it can be done, and wait them there."

They fell into the step of their march, Maccartey still following, accomplishing the miracle of Roger's pace under the rowelling sharpness of his dread.

"Listen." Roger turned back, his hand raised warningly. The sounds of walking that broke upon stones, and an oath whose words could not be heard. They skirted the path, hiding among the evergreens, and counted the enemy.

The train was moving in Indian file, a Boston man seen often drunk within the pillory at its

head. The Lady and two others followed, before they saw the Maid. Sir Humphrey walked beside her and the moon revealed her clearly.

He who came last was most dangerous of any, a woodsman and famous in a fight for ruse and cunning. When his powerful figure was concealed beyond the trees the two started swiftly, whispering for caution even after they had passed the Lady's band.

"They mean to keep the trail."

"Where be thy Devil's Nippers?"

"Not far from the town. 'Tis our best chance against the six."

"Hast thou a plan for th' attack?"

They were already in advance and Roger eased their speed to be within call if the Maid should cry out suddenly.

"To let the four get past——" he began.

"Then each of us take one—I'll make for Longlegs in the rear. See thou to the Maid and Sir Humphrey——"

"Sir Humphrey should be easy even for a child—He must be weak."

"Trust it not, lad. He's taut as a steel bow and full of battles."

They took their stations without the narrowed entrance of the Nippers, on the town side of the shallow ravine and hidden from those coming down the trail.

The silence lengthened till Roger was certain the leader had been wary and sought out another way. But even upon the conviction came footsteps sounding on the rocks.

There were no voices, only steps that beat louder till the foremost issued from the cleft boulders and tramped stolidly past the hemlocks where the two waited for Sir Humphrey and the Maid. One by one four emerged and moved onward in the path. The climbing had left them somewhat more apart. The Lady had changed places with the man behind him.

As Roger sprang forward he saw the guardian of the rear fall without a sound beneath Maccartey's swift attack, and in the instant that Sir Humphrey was felled by his own unexpected blow, he cried to the Maid,

"Back—quickly."

The girl obeyed, retreating at Roger's word through the narrow opening of the Nippers into the shelter of the rocks.

He and Maccartey leaped after as the four who had passed them turned hurriedly; both fired and one of the enemy staggered.

The moon was hid when most they needed it. The fight's worst moment was waged in the confusion of darkness that a moment earlier had been light.

The Lady had crept up the rocks and waited for a glimmer. When it came he hurled the great stone he had lifted, straight at Maccartey's head. The sailor fell, unconscious, as Sir Humphrey got upon his feet.

"Run—back—then to the left of the trail—the Governor"—Roger gasped to the girl as they set upon him.

He had held two at bay and even the three had

felt the welght of his resistance in a struggle that the shifty dark prolonged, but the five plunged on him at once, the wounded man, his right arm nerved by his hurt, striking with quick, murderous strokes. Two of the blows crashed down in heavy succession as the moon appeared again, and Roger dropped like a thing broken and done with upon the rocky path within the ledge.

Sir Humphrey's eyes went quickly after the Maid, and found her by the sheen of her cloak that caught the light among the trees. The Lady had lifted his rapier, thoroughly to content himself with the end of his foes, when the woods resounded to the noise of a rapid and furious approach.

He turned with an oath to where the cavalier had stood. Sir Humphrey was not there; he and the girl both were vanished.

"The cheat—the cheat," the pirate swore, mumbling the word as he pursued. Greed gave him speed and he searched with fiery haste.

The cavalier had bound the Maid so she could neither call nor move her arms.

"Swift there," he commanded as he discovered his pursuer. "Help me, ye devil—and lead us the shortest way——"

The noise of men approaching had grown louder in their ears; the clatter of a rush upon the stones followed them as they fled.

The victors had disappeared, all save the man that had been first to fall. Maccartey, raising himself upon an elbow, peered at him wondering.

The voice he knew best brought into his dazed staring a roused look of remembrance. He got

upon his feet and saw those who scoured among the evergreens for the triumphant foe, and wondered again at the silence of those who drew near with the Governor to another figure outstretched upon the ground.

Sir William had knelt and was working swiftly to restore the man.

"My God in Heaven—'tis Roger." Maccartey's cry rang terrible upon the silence and reached even the Maid.

The Governor stooped lower over the lifeless frame, his hand upon the heart, his cheek bent to detect a sign of breathing.

"Here lad, come," he said, "Come back—— The Maid's in danger——"

But even the name did not move the fixedness of Roger's look. One by one the searchers returned and gathered in the ravine where the full light of the changeful moon rested steadfastly upon the moveless form over which the Governor still worked in vain.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### A DEFENCE AND A CAPTURE

NICOLAS VERRING drew the window shade in Captain Fitch's parlour and looked out. The night was still light and clear save in the intervals when slow heavy clouds progressed across the moon. It was nearly midnight and the house had the dismal quiet of places where healthful slumber is replaced by silent watching and cool hours of the dark are sunk to the dead chill of fear.

Alison came noiselessly down the stairs and sought her husband.

"There is no more that we can do to-night," she whispered. "Mercy will watch till dawn; then Martha will take her place. I will get my things. They've laid them in the stair closet. Wilt thou bring the candle?"

While they talked, an angry shout had rung out at the waterside, but Boston slept profoundly and the watchers by the sick had not remarked the sound. Like an arm of the land, Long Wharf reached out into the sea. The *Soldan*, at anchor beside its farthest end, rode lifelessly upon the lifeless water that stretched in a metallic plain from the broad curve of the muddy shore.

Beneath the narrow shadow of the brigantine the Maid picked up the knife the Lady had dropped. The pirate's treachery was meeting its reward.

Sir Humphrey's shout had followed on discovery, and the two figures wrestled in a hard-breathed struggle from dark to light and back again into the shade. The girl glanced at them as she bent to seize the knife, and rising, moved in the shadow toward the land.

Upon the wharf the struggle grew more violent. The Lady fell backward, losing his hold, and toppled into the placid waves. His cloak torn off in the final grapple hung upon the margin of the planks.

As the cavalier turned his back to explore the shadow for the girl, the head of the pirate appeared above the water and he set off swimming for the land, cursing the victor who was already hastening to overtake the girl.

"Here he is!" Maccartey's voice rang among the ships, filling a ghostly silence with intrusive echoes. "He's stowed her on the ship!" He spread both arms as he spoke and the running figure lurched from the embrace.

"Where is the Maid?" The Governor pinioned Sir Humphrey with a resistless grip.

"I know not. I was seeking her. While I chastised her enemy she ungratefully made escape. She cannot be far." Behind the Governor a group cut off the shoreward way. The cavalier stood peacefully in the unrelaxing grasp.

"He lies. She's on the ship," Maccartey repeated doggedly. "How could she escape?"

"Just strolled away, not even pausing to see which of us was slain," Sir Humphrey answered flippantly. "An' you must grasp me so lovingly,

Governor Phips, pray beg your henchman here to modify his insults."

"How came you fighting?" the Governor asked, ignoring the words. The group had surrounded their prisoner and the questioner searched and then released him, remaining where the clasp could be instantly renewed.

"The Lady would have stabbed her. I wellnigh throttled the beast, but he escaped me by the water—— Her I can recover an' she be alive, but 'twill cost some exertion to secure the Lady." He sighed. "Here, good people," he went on, his tone hardening, "Get home now and cease to interfere with what concerns ye not."

"The violent carrying off of maids doth concern this colony," put in the Governor.—"And other traffic of a different sort.—Your course here is nigh run, Sir Humphrey Wildglass. What clemency you can expect will come from the safety of the Maid."

"Her safety regards me first who am her lawful guardian appointed by King James before ever they took her out of England. Who hath so great a right? And more, I am her kinsman and the head of her house as well."

"Is thy name then Armitage?"

Plimly, flanking the cavalier on the farther side, looked up.

"No more than she is. I am Gregory Bellingham and she my cousin Frances," he ended with impatience. "Are you satisfied?"

"Satisfaction were not so easy come at," answered Sir William. "Since the name she bears

is worn to help her from the knowledge of a cousin Gregory who would take her life!"

"The proof! What proof have ye of that slander?" demanded the man indignantly. "Would I tell it if 'twere so? And who else could but cut-throats!"

"Captain Verring's no cut-throat and he heard ye plan the murder on a London wharf," the Governor answered.

"A gentle tale, of weird imagination. But shows commendable ignorance of the ways of murderers. They tell not their schemes on public wharves where eavesdroppers may gloat upon the story! Ye've naught but speeches windy and nonsensical to back your words. I have the proofs of mine."

"Produce them," Governor Phips commanded promptly.

"Think ye I carry them about to satisfy the curiosity of the prying knaves of Boston?" retorted the cavalier. "An' ye'll wait me in some spot not too remote I will fetch them."

"We will go with thee," the Governor assented. "Come thou, Maccartey and Bozoun Plimly. 'Tis so wily a fellow we give him a guard. Zachary, go thou to my Lady for me and tell her that I be gone to the Sign of the Orange Tree on business of the state. And the rest of ye search the streets, though 'tis certain in my mind, an' there be truth in the tale, the Maid will be safe beneath my roof by this."

"That's not so sure; the pirate is abroad," put in Sir Humphrey. "He may well have had his knife in her while ye've held me here with your gentle interest in my ancestry."

"Thou'rt lying altogether," reiterated Maccartey, unshaken. "We'll find the Maid upon the ship."

The Governor was giving directions to the volunteers.

"And watch sharp for him they call the Lady," he ended. "I know no better food for carrion."

"The Maid—you've found her?" Sir William turned toward the shore as a new voice broke upon their colloquy.

"Roger—'tis thou! Nay, my lad, we've not found her. Thou'st done well. I'd not expected thee, under another hour."

"I leaned on Eben's arm. 'Twas but my head. My legs be sound enough. The *Soldan* hath been searched?"

"It will be. None hath left it since we came. Do thou get thee home," the Governor added. "We shall make the search thorough. An' the Maid be not found, for every fear or ill that she hath suffered his shall be——"

Sir Humphrey laughed. "'Tis noteworthy to mark, Captain Verring, that our strolls do so end in disaster for one of us. 'Twould seem to discourage the use of healthful exercise. I thought thou'dst pleasured the world by getting out of it. But a Puritan is ever hard to kill!" He sighed humorously, as children blow bubbles from the froth, and turned with a shrug to look off upon the sea.

Roger did not appear to know the man had spoken.

"Every instant we delay she may be in peril,"

he urged. "Come with me, two of ye." Before he had heard either denial or assent he was on his way to the brigantine. The strain and sharpness in his voice seemed to have gotten into his whole body, and the arrest of action to threaten the bond between it and the soul.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### MANY WATERS

"Many waters cannot quench love; neither can the floods drown it."

THE Maid hid herself in Mackrill Lane, and kneeling, with the handle of the knife clamped upon the stone flag that served as step to a great warehouse, she slipped the sharp point beneath the thongs that held her wrists, cutting painfully through the obstinate bonds, then set to work upon the knotted folds that gagged and stifled her.

She worked as rapidly as her anxious haste allowed, but pursuit might be even now close upon her. As she pulled off the tight-drawn bands of silk, Sir Humphrey's neckerchief, she imagined him watching her close by, waiting the dramatic moment of her uncertain freedom to fasten on her again.

Reconnoitring cautiously as she ventured forth, she saw the group upon the wharf, but felt a worse fear lest these be only added menace. Hurrying from them she concealed herself in devious alleys, pausing in every shadow, starting often at a half-suggested sound as if it had been a blow that took from her both breath and motion.

When she returned into King street, after minutes that had compassed years in shuddering dread, the long hill seemed deserted and she made

haste to cross it, meaning to hide herself again in lanes that would take her nearer to the refuge that she sought. The moon had disappeared once more under the sullen clouds that were spreading like blots soaking in upon the surface of the sky; the way was indistinct, and she hastened the faster, rejoicing in the darkness.

Comprehension of the cry she had heard came to her fully now for the first time. She had seen Roger fall, but Sir Humphrey's flight had come so quickly on their discomfiture she had believed the outcry but Maccartey's discovery of the escape. Memory, consciousness as well, had been a mere struggle in her mind that battled against the thing that threatened her, tied and impotent for any but a vague revolt. The fight on the wharf, the sight of the sea, had awakened her. Now that the succeeding weakness of dreadful terror began to yield to the necessity for deeds, she moved involuntarily toward the Governor's.

It was then, when she knew for what she went, that she saw the succour she would beg must be too late. Roger's face, the blood upon his cheek, the dead inertness of his figure, the hours that had passed since she had seen him fall, more than all, the desolation in Maccartey's voice, proved to her that the worst was true. The tenseness of her exhausted mood left her no room for hope, sending her at once to the extreme of possible horror.

There was no turning opposite the lane by which she had emerged into the broader thoroughfare and she hurried quickly on the farther side, no

longer afraid but keeping mechanically upon the track she had earlier chosen.

There had been more than one of the Lady's men unhurt after the fight. Was Roger, done to death for her, lying at their mercy, even his body unguarded from their profaning touch? Or had Maccartey stayed to watch? What could she do with life sucked dry of meaning, emptied of itself? In the obscurity to which her eyes had not grown used she overtook two who walked more slowly, and she had come swiftly against them before she had even guessed she was not alone in the whole street.

Her scream was low and had less sound of fright than final torture. She could not have answered a simple greeting without betrayal of her grief.

"Be not affrighted, woman; we will not harm thee." Nicolas Verring's voice gave kindly reassurance.

"'Tis some one suffering—she is weeping," his wife said quickly.

"Madam Verring"—the low cry flung itself out to her as to a shelter gained, and the girl's hands sought her in the dark. "They have killed him——"

"Whom is't ye mean, woman? Hath there been murder?" Mr. Verring spoke again, rebukingly as to a rash hysteria naught less than murder could excuse, but his wife understood.

"'Tis Roger," she cried instantly, and herself held upon the outstretched clasp, not weeping but grown icy cold. "Nicolas—'tis Roger."

"Why was it Roger?"—the girl's cry again—

the futile appeal. "There was none to care—for me—— 'Twas dark or I could have seen—and taken the blow instead——"

"And now—you were going"—Nicolas Verring's tones broke under the weight of what she told; the moon drawing out from its close covering showed him bent, moving unsteadily as if to find support.

"To the Governor's. *He* is there—in the woods. —None but Maccartey—and there be four left of——"

"Where—in the woods?" Nicolas Verring's voice again. His grasp had found his wife and clung as men cling under the knife.

The sense of them, these two who had given Roger being, thrilled and sustained her. She told the story, all she knew, as they went onward. The awful reality of her grief, one with their own, swept from their minds even the memory of false accusation. And when she came to the end of the struggle in the dark and what the light had shown, Nicolas interrupted, straightening his shoulders with a powerful hope.

"Then you are not sure! He is young. We may find him living. Sir William will go with us. He knows the way you speak of, I do not. Let us make haste."

His quickened pace was a kind of running, but they kept with him step for step. The girl had no hope. Power for all sense or feeling but pain was snapped.

Lady Phips came out to them in swift agitation.

"I do not know—— A message came——

The man gave it to Debby and ran to join the search for thee." She turned to the Maid. "He said only that Sir William is at the Inn of the Orange Tree. The Governor is but now come from the woods. He followed Roger and Captain Maccartey——"

"Then 'tis there we must go." Nicolas Verring turned quickly back.

"Sir William would not leave him unless"—began Alison, trembling sorely, but she could not finish. Her husband did not speak again. What days and years his soul re-lived in the long journey of the silent streets none could have guessed but the woman who moved beside him, broken with the memory of separation, and bearing his sorrow with her own.

By them walked the girl, swiftly, with neither tears nor words, the quick of her stabbed through with death and creeping deeper into that fastness whose walls, left undefended in her misery, had crashed before her eyes.

## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE OLD WAY

THE light streamed weakly from the unshuttered parlour of the Inn and a yellow gleam showed in Sir Humphrey's windows. In the street below a watching figure was visible to seeking eyes, precaution against possible escape.

Simon Bolt, mystery and excitement in his face where the heavy lids blinked sleepily, went from house to street and back again, or questioned the suddenly laconic Plimly on the landing above the stair. For a little, Nicolas Verring seemed to delay upon the path, failing before the mastery of his dread, but the sentinel had seen them, exclaiming at the Maid on whom the fitful glamour of the moon had cast a broken radiance.

Unconsciously the girl had kept the same pace and so had gone beyond the others, drawing more quickly near the entrance. But steps faster than her own sounded upon the street, and Roger, distancing Maccartey, sprang past them through the open door.

"She is not there!" they heard him say hurriedly to Bozoun who leaned from the stair to listen.

"My son!" The cry was Nicolas Verring's.

The Maid drew back suddenly, heard Roger's "Father!" and knew that Alison was clinging unrebuked in her boy's arms. Anything more was

blank to her till she came with the rest into the dim hall and stood upon the threshold of the lighted room. The mother looked up at her and back to a place by her own side. The men were talking in suppressed tones, with determined emphasis in every motion.

Roger had sprung to them startled, hearing their words.

"——Give her to him! Not if the King were here to ——" The voice went on, but the listener, raising his eyes to the Governor's face, had seen beyond him in the gilt-framed mirror and stared upon it like one who knows he is already mad. Nor did he lower his eyes nor move till the girl herself put out her hand to lean upon the solid framework of the door.

To the Maid the place to which she was beckoned seemed infinitely far away. And she felt alone, even in her rejoicing, her pride of self containment striving to rally against overwhelming odds. She tried to stir from the spot to which she had come unwitting what she did, to go back to the night and find cover for the nakedness of her soul's joy, but the body no longer answered to the will, and she lifted her eyes up, blind with her tears and forgetting all other refuge, as Roger turned from the figure in the mirror to know that she was there.

When the voices came to them again so that the words made sense in the oblivion of their happiness, the group of men had broken, and Maccartey gone without to strengthen the vigilance of the sentinel.

"What is it, Nicolas?" Alison Verring was asking earnestly. "Doth he demand the Maid?"

"Who?" Temple gazed from one to the other of those that had been talking.

"Sir Humphrey Wildglass. He saith he is thy cousin and thy guardian appointed by King James when thou wast still a child."

"'Tis not true," the Maid said quickly. "How could that be, yet I not know it. Mr. Amory hath governed my affairs as was my father's wish nor hath he been molested."

"'Tis a curious thing he hath not been molested an' he be not the one appointed by the law," commented Mr. Verring, who had stepped back to stand beside his son.

"He declareth he hath proofs, and so the power to take thee hence, since thou art not yet of age." The Governor spoke without alarm. "Of course he knoweth he cannot have thee," he added comfortably.

"But if the proofs be there and we defy the law he will take vengeance on thee—on all who would defend——" The girl began,

"He'll not succeed." The Governor interrupted her. "The man's a spy of the French. Fear naught for us."

"You have the proof?" Nicolas Verring asked the question without marking the warning frown that would have stopped it.

"The man taketh a wondrous time! Doth he think we can wait for him to compose his documents!" The Governor gazed upward testily.

Temple's look was still fixed on him, refusing to be deceived.

"You shall not endanger yourselves for me," she said with calmness. "I will prevent it." The decision in her tone, the force with which she conquered the weakness of her body and faced the horror of the possible truth, woke a stern gleam of battle in Nicolas Verring's eyes.

"Thou'lt yield no jot to the villain, let him prove what he will," he said vehemently.

Alison laid her fingers gently on the Maid's.

"Thou'lt not leave us—when we've just found thee," she said softly.

Temple turned to her with the great glow of unexpected joyousness breaking over her face.

"I've loved thee"—she answered quickly—"from the dinner at the Governor's—even before I——"

Alison tightened her clasp upon the firm hand beneath her own. Roger had said nothing of Sir Humphrey's proofs. What difference would they make? The universe in arms should not take her from him.

A shout broke on their waiting. While it still echoed Roger was without the house. The sentinel was struggling with a man who had a knife. The blade showed in the light. Maccartey from his station close beyond was almost upon the two. The man struck downward, and wrenching free from the wounded arm, tore himself away and darted from them at the moment Roger leaped across the threshold. In the final twisting wrench he had faced the house.

"'Tis the Lady!"

Roger was already far up the deserted street, Maccartey close upon him. But the man had vanished, eluding them cunningly.

"He came from that window, down the tree——" the sentinel explained as they returned.

He pointed to Sir Humphrey's room, now dark, where the open casement gaped upon them strangely.

Bozoun holding doggedly to his watching in the hall, questioned Simon Bolt who had dozed upon his vigil, and knew nothing.

"He is not come out?" Roger asked the question from below.

"Nay," Plimly answered. "Nor hath there been a sound, but he hath doused his candle. Doubtless he comes now. Who watches beneath the windows?"

"Eben——"

The others had looked forth wondering.

"Follow with me. You Maccartey, and Bozoun." Sir William was on the stair, Roger already beside him.

"'Tis a great day for the improving of the muscles," whispered the sailor with a wry look of weariness. "I think we've run our hundred leagues," but he ceased to jest when silence answered to the knock.

Simon Bolt, yawning no longer, blinked fast with curious eagerness, holding the candle near and grumbling disapproval as they attacked the door.

The draught blew the flame, grotesquely dancing. In its inconstant light the room appeared,

peaceful, undisturbed. At the table a figure was seated; with the fitful blaze and dying of the candle it seemed to move. They drew nearer and stood beside it, seeing the head fallen forward and the letter unfinished that it partly hid. Simon Bolt held the flaring gleam tremulously nearer yet and showed the clean cut upon the closely fitted doublet where the dagger had struck through. The breeze fluttered the lace about the fallen hand and swayed the heavy curtains of the bed.

Governor Phips drew out the letter and read it standing where he was. The tallow splashed upon it from the candle and the smell of the teased wick blended with the words.

"Sir Humphrey Wildglass," so it went, "regrets y$^{t}$ hee is unable to accept the Governor's urgent invitacion to attend him further, the way by the roof of the Orange Tree seducinge with better Promiss—but hee hopeth in ye neare Futur to return in full measur those Favors wch he hath rec$^{d}$ att y$^{e}$ h——"

The writing failed upon the broken *h* and a trailing line wavered a little across the page where the fingers that still grasped the quill had dropped.

The Governor's eyes went about the room to see if there was other egress than the hall.

"How reachest thou the roof, Simon?" he asked perplexedly.

"By this stairway closet, sir." The innkeeper's hoarse whispering sounded loud in the stillness. He threw wide an unlatched door and showed the ladder mounting from a storeroom to the garret overhead.

They closed the swinging sash that slammed upon its hinges, and lifting the figure, still warm with life that had burned hot within, laid it upon the curtained bed. The pulseless arms fell stiffly, but the face smiled on them in derision as if it spoke the words the hand had penned.

Below the women were talking quietly. Then a man's tone rose upon their speaking.

"'Twas God's good Providence sent us to the sick this eve," Nicolas Verring was saying reverently. "'Tis the first night in many months we have been abroad beyond a seemly hour."

"Had we not met thee as we did, thou'd not have shown us thy true self—we'd not have known thee as that moment——" Alison's sight dimmed as she turned to the stairway, and she saw those who descended through a shining cloud.

The Maid and Roger went slowly as they left the inn.

"Thou'lt take her home," the Governor had said. "She's wearied, lad, and I must wait. Thy father will assist me here in all I need. Tell Mary all is well—she'll know that when she greets ye, though——"

Without slow speech or formal answer they followed their unuttered thought, mounted the hill beyond the miller's stream, and found the Old Way by the Pond. Lingering as they passed, they gazed with a new vision on the staunch walls of Roger's home. At the willow bent like a camel they stopped.

"Rest here a little. I am but selfish to ask thee

to come so far." He unclasped his cloak and threw the loose folds upon the trunk.

"Thou didst not ask——" Even then she paused upon the *thou*, a quick warmth rising in her cheek. "I have come before," she finished softly. She had sat down once more upon the willow seat where she had rested in the dark May night.

He bent to hear and drew her gently to lean against his side.

"Thou—I thought——"

"Thought what?" she asked in the same undertone, the voice that fears to wake the hour to fullest consciousness lest it should then depart. "What didst thou think?"

"Thou lovedst me not.—I had no wonder. I knew the dulness of my ways—the Puritan——"

She interrupted, her low tone challenging the hour with strongest life.

"Thou'lt never know—even if I told thee all my days—how much I love thee."

The brief moments of their lingering gave mightily the largess they had been denied.

"Let me not ever," he pleaded as they rose to go, "grieve thee with what seems strange, with what is come of all that's been so different in our——"

"Thou wilt not," she answered, breaking again upon the halting words. "And thou'lt forgive me if I sometimes seem but slow to understand—— I see things clearer now—— Love teacheth us, I think."

The Mill Pond rippled upon the bank. The snow lay white where the willows stood, and caught the shadows of their waving strands. Her face, up-

turned to his, had its own light more lovely than the glamour of the moon.

Beneath his look she smiled and then grew wistful with the soberness of joy more strong than grief.

"'Tis like the flowers," he said. "'Tis happiness we need not fear,—and gives us knowledge—even of Him."

"I could be pitiful for all the world to-night." Her voice had found again its undertone.

"I too, for all save those who would do harm to thee," he said, and held her close against a sudden anger of remembered pain.

"Nay, for all," she answered. "We cannot know how they may need our ruth."